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Beyond Food Security:
a Political Ecology of Postcolonial Foodways and 'Good' Food in Urban Zimbabwe

Sara Filippa Brouwer

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Abstract

This thesis looks at the foodways of urban Zimbabweans in their daily lives. Foodways encompass the social, cultural and economic meanings, practices and processes in the production, sourcing, preparation and consumption of food. More specifically, I investigate what 'good' food means to urban Zimbabweans and critically evaluate how ideas and practices about 'good' food (hereafter without quotation marks) intersect with socio-ecological, economic and political processes at different personal and structural interconnected scales. Drawing upon six months of ethnographic participant observation and qualitative interviews in Chitungwiza and Johannesburg, this thesis demonstrates that urban Zimbabweans' daily engagements with food involve complex social and cultural meanings and practices. Using a political ecology lens, it also shows that urbanites' food relationships stand in relation to agrarian histories, colonial value systems borne out of colonial policies of conquest and control and post-independence structural violence. I demonstrate how urban Zimbabweans create a narrative of natural and local good food that is based on socio-ecological imaginaries of ways of being and living in *kumusha*, their rural ancestral homeland. I, furthermore, examine how urbanites negotiate this good food narrative with other valorisations of good food that are based on ideas of progress, development, modernity and social hierarchies. Lastly, I look at how gendered roles and responsibilities regarding the provision of good food are produced, employed and contested in the household and intersect with race and colonial discourses of domesticity. This thesis contributes to debates about how Zimbabwean and African urban residents' daily relationships to food are conceptualised. By considering urbanites' multifarious foodways and how good food is constructed in space and in time, this thesis complicates the prevailing paradigm of the study of food in urban Africa, which is dominated by the food security framework and crisis narrative that understand food relationships in an instrumental way and as economically preordained.

Lay summary

This thesis looks at the foodways of urban Zimbabweans in their daily lives. Foodways encompass the social, cultural and economic meanings, practices and processes in the production, sourcing, preparation and consumption of food. More specifically, I investigate what 'good' food means to urban Zimbabweans and critically evaluate how ideas and practices about 'good' food (hereafter without quotation marks) stand in relation to wider economic, political, social and ecological processes.

Drawing upon six months of in-depth observation and participation while living with my family-in-law in Chitungwiza (a city 30km from Zimbabwe's capital city Harare) as well as interviews in Johannesburg (South Africa), this thesis demonstrates that urban Zimbabweans' daily engagements with food involve complex social and cultural meanings and practices. I use political ecology as a theoretical framework to understand how my participants' various relationships with food are connected to agrarian histories, colonial value systems borne out of colonial policies of conquest and control and post-independence social and political structures that negatively and violently impact urbanites' daily lives. Political ecology looks, firstly, at the ways in which nature and society are intertwined, and secondly, at how these social and ecological interconnections are shaped by political processes on various scales.

I demonstrate how urban Zimbabweans create a narrative of natural and local good food that is based on ideas of social and ecological ways of being and living in *kumusha*, their rural ancestral homeland. I, furthermore, examine how urbanites negotiate this good food narrative with meanings of good food that are based on ideas of progress, development, modernity and social hierarchies. Lastly, I look at how gendered roles and responsibilities regarding the provision of good food are produced, employed and contested in the household and intersect with race and colonial discourses of domesticity.

This thesis contributes to debates about how Zimbabwean and African urban residents' daily relationships to food are conceptualised. By considering urbanites' meanings and practices of good food, it complicates the prevailing paradigm of the study of food in urban Africa, which is dominated by food security, a concept used to evaluate whether people have enough and nutritious food. This thesis challenges food security's narrow instrumental and economic understanding of urbanites' food relationships.

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To my husband, our son and our family in Zimbabwe

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed entirely by me, that it is my own work, and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed:

Sara Filippa Brouwer

Date: 27 April 2020

List of Acronyms

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
AFSUN	African Food Security Urban Network
FPE	feminist political ecology
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
BSAC	British South Africa Company
NLHA	Native Land Husbandry Act
WW II	World War II
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Program for Economic and Social Transformation
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community
USD	United States dollar

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Glossary

amai	mother
baba	father
boerewors	sausage
chibage	roasted corn on the cob
chigayo	grinding mill
Chii ichi?!	What is this?!
covo	green leafy vegetable used for relish
derere	okra
dhura	expensive
dovi	peanut butter
fonio	West African grain variety
gango	different types of meat mixed with green vegetables
gochi gochi	barbecue
gogo	grandmother
Gukurahundi	massacres of Ndebele citizens
huku	chickens
hunhu	ethics of collective personhood (Zimbabwe)
ischwa	termites
Kkkk	written expression of laughter commonly used on social media
kombi	minivan
kukiya-kiya	exploiting whatever resources are at hand for self-sustenance
kukwata	to bubble (sadza)
kumusha	ancestral homeland
Kurumidzai	quick
kwata kwata	the sound of bubbles in sadza
machipisi	chips
madora	Mopane worms

mafuta	fat cooking oil
maheu	fermented maiz/finger millet drink
maita basa	thank you very much
makoti	daughter-in-law
mapfunde	sorghum
mapundu	lumps in sadza
maputi	salted toasted corn kernels
masalad	Zimbabwean person who tries hard to be Western, urban or modern
masawu	dried ziziphus berry
Maswera sei?	How is your afternoon?
matemba	white bait
matohwe	snot apple/African chewing gum
mauyu	baobab fruits
mazaai	eggs
mazhanje	wild loquats
Mazoe	Zimbabwean brand of fruit cordial
mazondo	cow feet/cow trotters
mbichana	slow
mbodza	undercooked, raw and stiff sadza
mbudzi	goat
mhandire	groundnuts
mhunga	bulrush millet
muboora	pumpkin leaves
mudhara	older man with high standing
mufushwa	sun dried green leafy vegetables
mufushwa	sundried green vegetables
mugaiwa	mealie meal from the grinding mill
mugoti	long wooden spoon

munhu munhu nevanhu	Shona aphorism meaning that an individual's existence is interconnected with that of the community and the environment in which he or she lives or comes from
munyemba	cow pea leaves
munyevhe	spider flower leaves
mupfuhwira	herbal potion/aphrodisiac
muroora	daughter-in-law
muroyi	witch
murungu	white person
musika	market
mutakura	mixture of maize, nuts and pulses
mwana wevhu	children of the soil
nyii	bird plum
Operation Chikorokoza Chapera	Operation No More Illegal Mining
Operation Murambatsvina	Operation Throw Out Rubbish
piri piri	spicy sauce
sadza	hot maize meal porridge
sadza reMhunga	hot porridge made from bulrush millet
sadza reZviyo	hot porridge made from finger millet
sekuru	grandfather
Taswera	My afternoon is fine
teosinte	wild grass, the wild progenitor of maize
tsotsi	thiefs
tsunga ne dovi	green leafy vegetable with peanut butter
tsunga ne dovi	mustard greens with peanut butter
Ubuntu	ethics of collective personhood (South Africa)
ugali	thick maize porridge (sadza in Swahili)
zhing zhong	low-quality Chinese products sold in street stalls and shops
zviyo	finger millet

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis looks at the foodways of urban Zimbabweans in their daily lives. Foodways encompass the social, cultural and economic meanings, practices and processes in the production, sourcing, preparation and consumption of food (Cannuscio, Weiss & Asch 2010). More specifically, this thesis investigates what 'good' food means to urban Zimbabweans and critically evaluates how ideas and practices around 'good' food intersect with socio-ecological, economic and political processes on different interconnected scales. My primary aim is to increase understandings of how Zimbabwean urbanites' daily relationships to food are conceptualised.

The prevailing paradigm of the study of food in urban Africa, which despite existing studies that recognise the socio-cultural aspects of food in urban daily life, remains dominated by a food security framework. Food security is most commonly defined as

> a situation in which all people at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, IFAD & WFP 2013).

As I further explain below, due to its narrow and technical focus on households' ability to access to sufficient, suitable and nutritious food, people's relationship with food in the food security framework is essentially conceptualised in terms of people's quantifiable resource access and livelihoods.

Yet, as my ethnographic fieldwork in Chitungwiza during late 2016 and early 2017 and interviews with Zimbabweans in Johannesburg in April 2017 show, in the face of political and economic instability, Zimbabwean urban residents cultivate multiple and simultaneous social, cultural, ecological, political and

economic relationships to food in their daily lives. Using a political ecology framework, this thesis demonstrates how people's daily engagements with food are, instead of solely economically preordained, the result of complex negotiations between social, cultural, ecological, political and economic processes on various personal and structural scales. It also connects the social control of, and power relations in, the food system and society to urbanites' daily relationships with food.

1.2 Fieldwork in a context of economic and political crisis

Zimbabwe as a case study of a political ecology of urban foodways provokes important questions about how people relate to food in a context of economic and political instability. Raftopoulos (2016) wrote in 2016 that 'Living in and through Crisis has become the modality through which Zimbabwean politics has come to be practised and imbibed in daily lived experience'. As will become clear throughout this thesis, social, cultural, ecological and spatial relationships with food did not disappear even when people's material relationship to food was crucial in the process of living with and adapting to an economic downturn. My participants had clear ideas about what 'good' food meant to them, and more importantly, strove to consume what they regarded as 'good' food despite challenging economic and practical circumstances.

The fieldwork of this study was conducted in the context of a tumultuous country amid an economic meltdown and palpable political instability. Most Zimbabweans felt they were on the brink of a repetition of the 2008 crisis. In 2008, the country experienced what turned out to be its worst economic crisis, following years of public sector negligence, authoritarian rule, political patronage, corruption and coercion as well as economic mismanagement that culminated into political violence and social and economic despair. Annual inflation was hovering at 231 million per cent and Zimbabwe's external debt stood at six billion US dollars (McGreal 2008). For urban residents, this meant that basic amenities, healthcare, electricity, water, housing, transport and food outlets became even more inaccessible, economically and physically (Potts

2011). In addition, a steep decline in food production and a hiatus in (formal) food imports contributed to a surge in food poverty in urban areas, with disastrous consequences for people's wellbeing (Tawodzera 2011).

Even though this also applied to urban Zimbabwe before 2008, the economic collapse in 2008 resulted even more in an informal economy of getting by. Life for most urban residents became characterised by multiple forms of 'making do', from vegetable vending to illegal foreign currency trading to bribe-taking and pilfering at work. In local parlance referred to as *kukiya-kiya*, Jones (2010, p. 286) explains that *kukiya-kiya* suggests 'cleverness, dodging, and the exploitation of whatever resources are at hand, all with an eye to self-sustenance'.

In August 2016 when carrying out my first phase of fieldwork in Chitungwiza that lasted until mid-September, the *kukiya-kiya* economy was still central to the majority of urbanites' livelihoods. More than eighty-four per cent of the country's employed population was in informal employment (Mlambo 2017). Because the structural causes of economic decline had not been addressed since the 2008 crisis, most urbanites found themselves, again, in a situation that was wreaking severe havoc on their daily lives. Sevenzo (2016) aptly describes the context in 2016:

> The country is importing more than it is selling, unemployment continues to soar, while a proud history of good education has only produced millions of vendors selling cheap goods and food to their fellow impoverished citizens as businesses fold around them.

Out of frustration about the government's and police's corruption as well as the prospect of bond notes and the effects of cash shortages (delayed salary payments for civil servants and day-long queues at banks to withdraw a small permissible amount of one's money), mass citizen-led protests had been gathering steam since July (BBC 2016).

When I came back to Zimbabwe in November 2016, in an effort to address the acute cash shortages and stamp out an impending economic downturn, the government had, amidst public outcry, introduced the bond notes as a cash substitute and new national currency. Its value was pegged against the US dollar and the notes could only be used in Zimbabwe (AP 2016). Soon after their introduction, inflation and the national debt rose. It was palpable that during my fieldwork, people felt nervous, as they feared a repetition of 2008 when hyperinflation made their savings and pensions disappear and when it was hard to obtain food in the shops. Without a solid productive base and thus low foreign exchange as well as increased borrowing to fund government expenditure and the bond notes, the prospects were that the country would end up in economic free fall again (Southall 2017), which it did, this time under the watch of Emerson Mnangagwa who after a military intervention was inaugurated as president in November 2017.

Had I conducted fieldwork for this study in 2020, I believe that the various social, ecological and cultural food relationships that I describe in this thesis would still be as important; however, they would probably have taken a different form in the face of more dire hardships in day-to-day life than in 2016–17. Even though the various symbolic meanings of foods remain, the difference would perhaps be that material relationships with food would be more stressful and acute.

1.3 Chitungwiza and urban Zimbabwe

This thesis is predominantly based on ethnographic fieldwork in Chitungwiza, a city half an hour drive away from the capital Harare (see figures 1.1 and 1.2). The official population was 172,000 after independence and over the years it has amassed almost double the number of inhabitants. Yet, the unofficial number is estimated to be close to half a million. After Harare and Bulawayo, Chitungwiza is the country's third-biggest city (Chirisa, Mazindu & Bandauko 2016).

Chitungwiza was developed in 1967 as a dormitory township twenty-three kilometres southwards of Harare. As part of the construction of seven townships for black Zimbabweans on the outskirts of Salisbury to create a stable workforce for a growing urban manufacturing industry in the 1950s and 1960s, Chitungwiza was meant to supply labour to a major industrial area south of Salisbury. At independence, a small industrial hub was established in Chitungwiza, of which only a few manufacturing industries were still functioning in the time of my fieldwork in 2016 and 2017. In 2016, informal economies of *kukiya-kiya* characterised the economic landscape of Chitungwiza (Chirisa, Mazindu & Bandauko 2016).

In 1994, Wekwete and Rambanapasi (1994) described Chitungwiza as a dormitory town, because most of its inhabitants were employed in Harare. In 2016 and 2017, many inhabitants still worked in Harare, albeit now as self-employed in the informal *kukiyaku-kiya* economy.

Planned as part of an orderly segregated colonial city, like most other high-density neighbourhoods in Zimbabwe, Chitungwiza lacks self-built unplanned freestanding housing like in other African cities (Potts 2011). It is a sprawling city with different shopping centres and neighbourhoods, called units. The houses range from small box-like dwellings to three-bedroom houses, all set within individual plots and made of permanent concrete structures. The direct food environment exists of a mix of Zimbabwean and foreign-owned chain supermarkets, smaller food-selling retailers like a butcher, regulated and permanent fresh food market stalls, fast-food restaurants, tuck shops, unregulated roadside street vendors, backyard and street gardens.

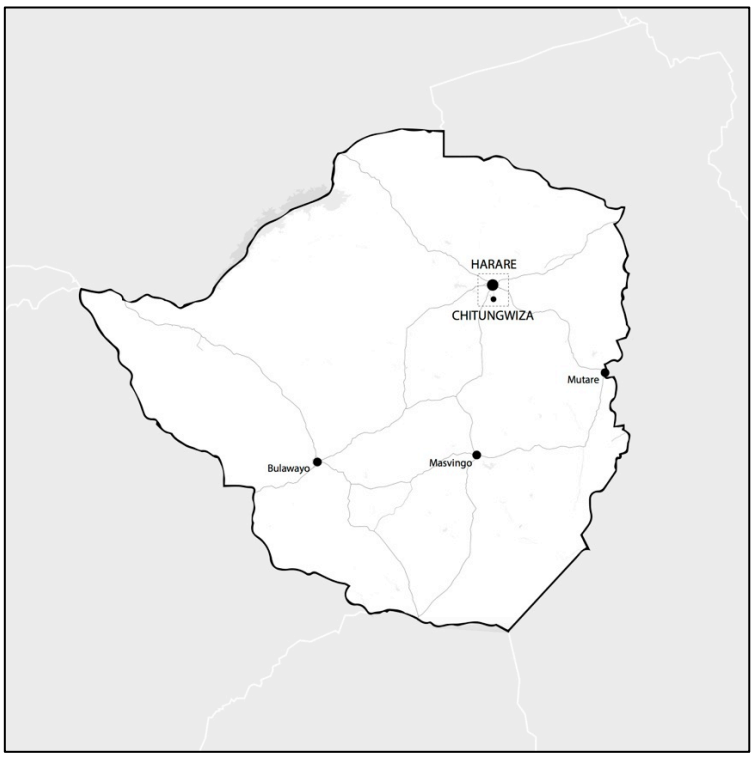

Figure 1.1: Map of Zimbabwe's main cities and location of Chitungwiza. Source: made by Lennart Brouwer, adapted from Google Maps.

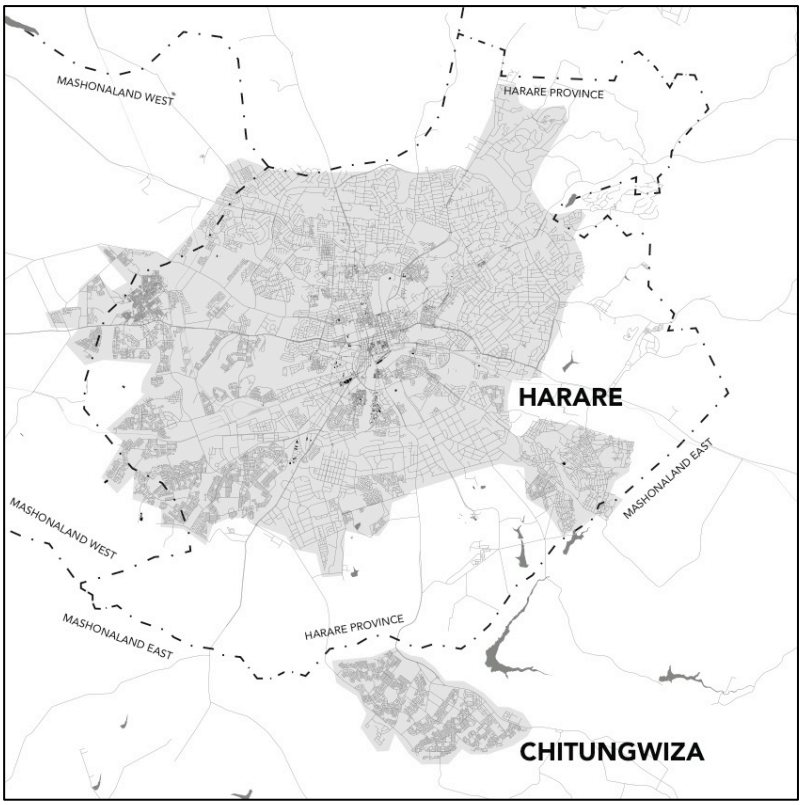

Figure 1.2 Map of Harare and Chitungwiza. Source: made by Lennart Brouwer, adapted from Google Maps

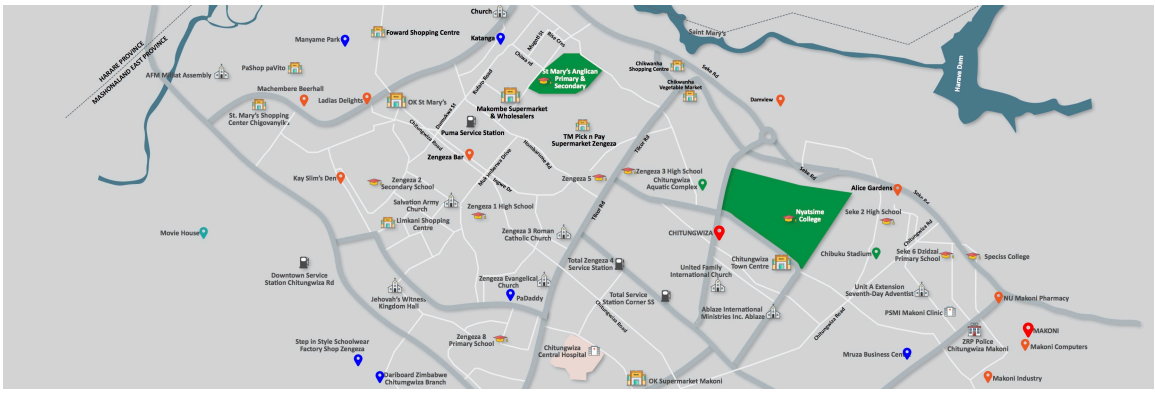

Figure 1.3 Map of Chitungwiza. Source: made by Chiedza Chinhara, adapted from Google Maps

Studying foodways as well as meanings and practices of 'good' food in Chitungwiza, the urban realm, is important because the main trend is that Zimbabwe is an urbanising society, even though there remains uncertainty about the extent and nature of urbanisation due to incomplete and inconsistent socio-spatial census data. Understanding of urbanites' various relationships to food aids in discussions about how to equip the growing number of urban households' with the ability to choose foodways that they desire for various reasons. According to figures of the World Bank, thirty-three per cent of Zimbabweans lived in an urban area in 2010. The population of Zimbabwe's large urban centres continues to grow in aggregate terms, even though the annual growth rate in large urban centres had slowed down between 2002 and 2012, according to figures of the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency. Rapid population growth seems to have particularly occurred in smaller urban centres and peri-urban zones (ICED 2017).

Mbiba (2017), however, argues that instead of thinking in terms of the urban and the rural, mobility and circularity are better terms to describe spatial population patterns in Zimbabwe. Zimbabweans' spatial presence is mobile and circular because of their multi-sited histories and livelihoods. Multi-spatial households are common because people have sought to protect themselves by diversifying their economic activities in different geographic and economic places in the face of changing land rights due to land reform, social turbulence arising from state interventions and political and economic instability, climate-

change-induced severe weather events and mining industry dynamics (ICED 2017; Mbiba 2017). Furthermore, as I address in Chapter 4, cultural and historical aspects are also part of the multi-spatial nature of urban households. As will become clear throughout this thesis and particularly in participants' socio-ecological ideas of 'good' food in Chapter 5, households' multi-spatial nature is reflected in the central importance of urban–rural connections in urbanites' foodways.

1.4 Food security as part of a crisis narrative

While scholars in food studies (Counihan & Van Esterik 2013; Guptil, Lucal & Copelton 2013), geographies of food (Cook et al. 2006; Cook et al. 2008; Goodman 2016), anthropology (Mintz & Du Bois 2002) and social psychology (Furst et al. 1996; Sobal & Bisogni 2009) have long documented food's simultaneous economic, social and symbolic importance in Euro–American environments, academic studies that go beyond viewing food in terms of scarcity and abstract quantitative patterns and that acknowledge the complex and contextual social nature of food in everyday life in urban Africa are in a minority (Baro & Deubel 2006). The dominant paradigm of looking at food behaviours in the African city remains characterised by views that assume resource access and people's economic relationships with food are the key determining factors in explaining foodways (Battersby & Watson 2018).

I argue that this food security approach to conceptualising people's interactions with food in Africa is part of a broader crisis narrative and international discourse that stresses chronic crisis, scarcity and material and cultural loss. It is a narrative that obscures complex agricultural- and food-related histories (Freidberg 2003; Mandala 2003) as well as people's various current mundane relationships with food and 'African urban life forms' (Pieterse 2010; Myers 2011). The narrative is persistent and thriving because agro-food corporations, governmental and non-governmental international development agencies can use it in their own interest. Fairbairn (2012) and Jarosz (2011) argue that they have used the concept of food security to

advance their own economic and political interests by promoting solutions to (food) poverty alleviation through neoliberal free-market principles and privatisation.

The food security approach to researching food relationships can be seen as part of this crisis narrative because it assumes food relationships are economically preordained. Studies that use the concept of food security are mostly focused on individual households and their economic and physical ability to secure stable, nutritious and suitable food. People's engagement with food is conceptualised in terms of their nutrition status and the quantity and quality of the food that they are able to consume within their economic means. Studies often use universal quantitative measures of food security (for example, the dietary diversity scale; see McCordic & Frayne 2017) across different socio-economic and geographical settings (Burchi & De Muro 2016; Ghuha-Khasnobis, Acharya & Davis 2007; Santeramo 2015). In Southern Africa, several studies have investigated the relationship between neighbourhood and socio-economic household characteristics on the one hand, and dietary diversity scales, food accessibility assessments and months of adequate food provisioning ratings on the other (Crush & Caesar 2014; Crush & Frayne 2009; Even-Zahav & Kelly 2016; Tawodzera 2011; Roos et al. 2013; Riley & Caesar 2018; Riley & Legwegoh 2014).

Insights gathered by such methods are certainly valuable for understanding citywide trends in the nutritional status of households or for making policies on issues of under- and mal-nutrition, for example. Yet, their technical measures of economic and physical accessibility to nutritious food imply that people's food relationships are solely economic in nature and are based on their limited socio-economic means. This perpetuates a reductionist view that Africans' foodways are determined by being in a state of perpetual need. While not wanting to downplay the necessity of food insecurity policies and the hardships that Zimbabweans have faced and continue to face, central to this thesis is the idea that Africans' daily lives, in which foodways are of central

importance, are filled with social and cultural meaning, even in times of material hardships and economic crisis.

Urban scholars Edgar Pieterse (2010) and Garth Myers (2011), whose writings are rooted in postcolonial Southern perspectives, follow a similar argument in their writings on African cities. They argue that the aforementioned crisis narrative and the accompanying 'liberal humanist moral project of the kind which frequently underpins policy prescriptions to improve the quality of life (for example, food security), livelihoods, governance and social fabric in African cities' prevents serious engagement with African urban life forms (Pieterse 2010, p. 1). The crisis narrative inhibits consideration of the idea that Africans, instead of constantly living in a survivalist mode, want to strive for human flourishing, even under adverse socio-economic conditions. Striving for human flourishing means attempting to simultaneously achieve humans' physical needs (food, shelter, health, education, safety and employment), as well as social needs (belonging, love, affection, community, companionship and fulfilling relationships) and emotional needs (self-worth and self-esteem, respect, achievement and realising personal potential). Where food security only addresses physical needs, as I will show in the coming chapters, despite my participants' hardships, food is intertwined with all of these needs.

1.5 Critiques of food security

Scholars in the interdisciplinary field of critical nutrition have critiqued the food security framework for not engaging with everyday experiences of food and the economic and political structural factors that determine these (Guthman 2014; Dixon 2016). Allison Hayes-Conroy and Elizabeth Sweet (2015) argue that such approaches make understandings of food insecurity in households seem static and standardised, obscuring complex social, political, embodied and emotional dynamics involved in daily food encounters. Others have equally maintained that looking at people's relationship with food in terms of metrics risks viewing food as a universal and apolitical commodity void of

social and cultural meaning (Hayes-Conroy et al. 2014; Scrinis 2008; Yates Doerr 2012). In the following conceptual chapter, I elaborate more on studies that have taken into account socio-cultural conceptualisations of food.

Using food justice and food sovereignty frameworks, scholars examining indigenous foodways have also voiced similar critiques of the food security approach. They have drawn attention to the importance of understanding people's social, ecological, political and other manifold relationships with food (Fazzino & Loring 2011; Power 2008; Mares & Pena 2011; McCutcheon 2011; Norgaard, Reed & van Horn 2011; Wilson 2016). According to these studies, food in daily life can relate to spiritual, moral and social values (for example, dignity, self-respect, basic human rights of eater or producer) (Chapell 2018); human connections to land, nature and farming systems, feelings of belonging (Rocha & Liberato 2013); body relationships, commensality of meals, indigenous, household and community food knowledges (Power 2008); and food quality standards (Hammelman & Hayes-Conroy 2015, p. 43).

Food sovereignty and food justice frameworks offer a critique to the food security framework, because they acknowledge that social and cultural aspects of food are central to people's agency and autonomy in deciding what to eat (Patel 2009). Food sovereignty is defined as 'the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems' (La Via Campesina 2007). The food justice paradigm emphasises equity in decision-making processes and distribution of resources, opportunities and privileges in the food system (Cadieux & Slocum 2015) and locates food insecurity within wider political, economic and socio-political systems (Alkon & Agyeman 2011). While constantly changing and differently interpreted by a variety of actors in different localities (Jarosz 2014), the meaning and goals of both frameworks are closely aligned and both frameworks have been a shared vehicle for agri-food movements to propose an alternative to the corporate food system, which is deemed unjust,

unsustainable and undemocratic. In both food justice and food sovereignty frameworks, food insecurity is seen as a symptom of unequal power relations and structural inequalities in society and the food system. The resultant marginalisation of certain groups of people, then, not only takes away their ability to consume enough safe and nutritious food, but also their agency in deciding what kind of food they want to eat and what the food system that produces it looks like. The food sovereignty framework is further discussed in Chapter 2.

In the same vein that food sovereignty and food justice approaches recognise that foodways should not be understood in isolation from structural political processes, this thesis locates urbanites' diverse food relationships within wider political, economic and socio-political systems. In this thesis, I recognise that unequal power relations play a role in shaping inequalities in people's ability to not only consume enough and sufficiently nutritious food, but also eat good food. I address the relations between foodways and structural societal forces by using a political ecology framework, which offers a lens to understand such interactions between societal structures on the one hand, and ideas and practices of good food on the other. I do not use food sovereignty or food justice as central frameworks, because they have predominantly been used by, and been studied in relation to, people and movements who actively aim to change the unequal power relations in the current agro-food system. This thesis focuses on foodways and meanings of good food in people's daily life, in which they do not purposefully aim to change the food system. The other reason to use a political ecology framework is that, as the name implies, it revolves, unlike food sovereignty and food justice, around socio-ecological relations and a politics of scale. As I explain further in the following conceptual chapter and will become clear in this thesis, socio-ecological relations, on personal and structural scales, are crucial to understanding Zimbabweans' urban foodways and conceptions of good food.

1.6 Main research questions

The main research questions guiding this study are:

- What does 'good' food mean to urban Zimbabweans in their daily lives and how is the category of good food constructed in time and space?
- How do (gendered) meanings and practices of good food stand in connection to socio-ecological, spatial, political and economic processes and their power relations on different interconnected scales?
- How can an understanding of good food and its relation to multi-scalar and power-laden structural processes contribute to the conceptualisation of people's relationships to food in Southern Africa?

Framing the main questions around 'good' food enables me to research the moral drives behind urbanites' foodways and their value judgments of the food they prefer or aspire to eat. The apostrophes around the word 'good' indicate that there is not a single definition of good food, because it involves myriad personal values and meanings. I hereafter refer to 'good' food without apostrophes.

I came to use good food as a central analytical concept, because my ethnographic participant observation and interviews, which were focused on the broad goal of understanding people's daily foodways, came to revolve around various meanings and practices of food that participants preferred or desired to eat (for example, traditional and natural food or modern and urban foods). The other main reasons why I have chosen the use the notion of 'good food' are as follows. As the meaning of good is inherently subjective, the notion of good food captures personal, complex and contradictory processes of meaning-making around food and the social and ecological systems through which it is obtained and produced. Moreover, instead of foregrounding how people's economic circumstances determine their relationship to food, focusing on good food and how urbanites value food illuminates that people's relationships to food are social and cultural in nature, diverse, multi-layered and based spatial connections and socio-ecological relations. In other words,

asking what good food means to people, instead of asking whether they have, and how they obtain, enough and nutritious food, acknowledges that food is central in their quest to flourish as humans.

It is important to highlight here that the notion of good food has not been borrowed from existing literature or other authorities. The notion of good food is my proposal to find a more nuanced and grounded way to research the various meanings people cultivate in their quest to eat the food that they desire on their own terms. An existing notion that is used to examine the food that people prefer or desire to eat is 'food preferences'. This term, however, has been used in economically driven consumer research where preferences are used to create preconceived and static consumer profiles (Bell et al 2020; Symank et al 2017), veiling the contradictory and complex sets of values that are central to foodways. Furthermore, food preferences are used in research on food security, because it is part of the food security definition (in bold):

> a situation in which all people at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and **food preferences** for an active and healthy life (FAO, IFAD & WFP 2013).

In the realm of food security, the notion of food preferences has often been operationalised through concepts of 'food adequacy' or 'culturally appropriate food' (Hayes-Conroy & Sweet 2015). Yet, the additional socio-cultural clause to food security studies or policies risks reducing food to a culturally suitable nutrient commodity, obscuring the multifarious social, cultural, political and ecological relationships people have with food and food systems. As already explained, the notion of good food opens up ways to research these complex relationships.

1.7 The value of a political ecology framework

There are two primary reasons that political ecology provides an effective and suitable tool for the main question of this research, which is to investigate the relations between ideas and practices of good food, socio-ecological systems and spatial, political and economic processes. Political ecology is a conceptual tool that explores socio-environmental systems, knowledge and practices and the economic and political processes through which these are produced. It explicitly considers power relations operating at different scales in, and the social control of, society and, in the case of this thesis, the food system (Robbins 2012).

The first reason is that food is simultaneously cultural and natural, symbolic and material. It embodies political ecology's focus on socio-ecological relations, a concept that navigates the ways in which society and nature are co-produced and intertwined. Food shows that the social and natural are relational instead of separate. In order to eat (and basically exist), humans must transform nature into agricultural ecosystems. During this process, which is inherently political, the social and natural realms are in constant interaction and transformation. Socio-ecological systems and the accompanying economic, political and cultural processes that govern them provide for the basis of our existence, or as Heynen calls it, human metabolisation (2003, p. 981). This becomes clear in this thesis, as ideas and practices of good food are interwoven with socio-ecological systems in the rural homeland and their governance by political processes over time.

The second reason why political ecology is suitable to study meanings and practices of good food is that the framework is capable of highlighting a politics of scale that impacts ideas and practices of good food. A politics of scale places place-specific conditions in relation to different scales and acknowledges the functioning of power dynamics within such linkages. This line of thinking applies to this thesis because I show that valorisations of good food are borne out of the interaction of historically situated ecological, socioeconomic and political processes that are operating at different scales

and that are subjected to and governed by multiple power relations. Thinking about a politics of scale is, furthermore, applicable to this thesis because I show that even though good food is imagined as originating from a local and personal scale, ideas of good food are constructed from the interaction between social, economic, political and spatial and ecological processes originating from and operating across interconnected different scales.

1.8 Research design

Researching the diverse relationships urbanites have with food requires me to understand the complex nature of thought processes about food and daily food practices and encounters. This research is therefore based on ethnographic participant observation and qualitative interviews because they are methods that cater for in-depth understandings of social life. During my fieldwork, I participated in, observed and talked about urbanites' foodways, the social, cultural and economic practices, processes and ideas in the production, sourcing, preparation and consumption of food. At all times, I kept in mind the broad main questions of how urban Zimbabweans value and give meaning to good food and how this is connected to socio-ecological systems and wider political and economic structures.

While living with my family-in-law in Chitungwiza during a total of seven months between August 2016 and April 2017, I participated in daily tasks around the household, such as cooking, shopping, cleaning and looking after children. Over time, I became part of the rhythm of the household and my role as *muroora* (daughter-in-law) increasingly took precedence over my role as researcher. During mundane daily activities I conducted informal interviews with family, family friends and neighbours. Due to visa-related circumstances, I have had to also interview Zimbabweans in Johannesburg. Before migrating to South Africa, they had lived in Zimbabwe in similar urban areas as Chitungwiza. I explain more about my methodology in Chapter 3.

1.9 Thesis structure

As already described, the following chapter outlines the theoretical framework of this thesis: political ecology. What follows is the methodology. Here I explain why my research design is suitable to study ideas and practices of good food and their relation to socio-ecological systems and wider political processes. I also go into more depth about the choices I made during my fieldwork and approach to analysis. The fourth chapter looks at the colonial and postcolonial history of Zimbabwe, with a particular focus on political and economic factors, economy of food and agriculture and factors that have impacted daily living, foodways in urban areas as well as rural-urban connections and the country's agricultural sector. In the three chapters that follow, I present and analyse my findings.

Chapter 5 revolves around the question of how urban Zimbabweans imagine good food. I show that ideas and imaginaries of good food are strongly rooted in socio-environmental systems and spatial rural-urban connections to the rural homeland. The chapter presents how ideas about good food being traditional and natural form the basis of a place-based narrative that has the power to override day-to-day realities and other attitudes towards good food in Chitungwiza. I show how these often idealised practices and spaces of good food are linked to embodied ways of being, knowing and living in specific territories (the rural/ancestral homeland) through various symbolic, social and cultural relations. I address how these ways of being in the ancestral homeland are partly connected to the colonial control of agriculture and socio-ecological systems, and partly connected to traditional culinary histories.

Chapter 6 looks at how the narrative of traditional and natural good food stands in relation to daily realities, other valorisations of good food, various other scales simultaneously present in the 'local'. I show how especially the younger generation disturbs, resists and reconceptualises the narrative presented in the previous chapter. The chapter complicates the nostalgic idea of *kumusha,* the ancestral or rural homeland, as always something positive. I show how the natural good food narrative exists alongside valorisations of

good food that are predominantly based on ideas of progress, development, modernity and social hierarchies. I address how these valuations stem from multiple and overlapping political processes on different scales, such as racial hierarchical discourses established during colonialism.

The last empirical chapter is occupied with the question what impact gender roles have on imagining and providing for good food and how gender is produced, employed and contested in relation to meanings and practices of good food. By considering Zimbabwe's colonial (racial) legacies, I look at how race intersects with gender in ideas and practices surrounding good food. I demonstrate that this becomes particularly clear in discourses and practices around domesticity**.** In the concluding chapter, I look at what my material tells us about conceptualisations of relationships to food in urban Africa. In doing so, I reflect on how this thesis contributes to debates in political ecology, food security and food justice and food sovereignty.

2. Conceptual framework: political ecology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how and why a political ecology framework is relevant to the study of people's diverse relationships with food in urban Zimbabwe. Political ecology scholarship examines the integration of socio-ecological systems, power and politics operating at interrelated scales. A political ecology framework enables me to conceptualise how ideas about and practices surrounding good food are constructed from the interaction of historically situated ecological, socioeconomic and political processes, which are operating at different scales and shaped by multiple power relations (Robbins 2012).

After further elaborating on critiques of food security, the food sovereignty paradigm, and socio-cultural conceptualisations of food, the rest of this chapter focuses on how the core concepts of political ecology: socio-ecological relations and a politics of scale. Throughout the chapter, I make clear how these apply to geographies of food and this thesis. I also address political ecology's feminist and postcolonial critiques. The relational and visceral turns in human geography are discussed, as they intersect with ideas in political ecology.

2.2 Food security, food sovereignty and socio-cultural conceptualisations of food in urban Africa

As I discussed in the introduction, the food security discourse can be seen as part of a crisis narrative, which became even more apparent during and after the 2007-2008 global economic crisis, when the world bore witness to a global food crisis. In late 2007, the *Economist*'s food-price index reached its peak since its founding year, 1845. In two years' time global food prices had risen by 75 per cent. Additionally, world grain reserves were at fifty-four days, their lowest point so far (Holt-Gimenez and Kenfield 2008: 3). In light of these circumstances, the ability to secure food for the world's population became a

pressing topic of debate among international development organisations, financial institutions, governments, NGOs and other actors in the arena of international development cooperation. Themes such as rural development, food production, hunger and above all the keyword 'food security', gained prominence in the development agenda again (McMichael & Schneider 2011).

The basic premise of the discourse surrounding food security is that increased agricultural production needs to occur in order to meet increased demand and that a food secure world is reached by means of intensification and monocropping, increased inputs and biotechnologies, and global markets and their liberalisation (Tomlinson 2013). A frequently used sentiment in the media, public speeches, policy documents and reports contends that the world needs to double global food production by 2050 to feed 9 billion people. In this vein, Marsden (2010) argues that transnational agribusinesses and governance institutions have generated a 'new productivism' discourse.

Food sovereignty sets itself apart from the food security discourse, because it addresses the power relations in, and political economy of, the global food system. In the food security discourse, it does not matter who produces the food, which production model is used, and what the conditions are under which it is produced, as long as the food security goals are met. This leads Patel (2009: 665) to argue that:

> The definition of food security avoids discussing the social control of the food system. As far as the terms of food security go, it is entirely possible for people to be food secure in prison or under a dictatorship.

Food sovereignty sets requirements to the way food security is reached by considering the importance of sustainability, justice and democracy in the entire food system, from production to consumption. Food sovereignty draws attention to the importance of people's agency in defining how food security looks like for them. The ability to make decisions over how food is produced and consumed, which is important considering the central role that the diverse

socio-cultural aspects of food play in human life, is not directly incorporated in the food security definition. As also elaborated on in the introduction, scholars using the food sovereignty paradigm have emphasised the need to consider people's social, cultural, ecological, political and other manifold relationships with food. While they do not adhere to a food sovereignty framework, in what follows, I consider how the dominant strands of studies on food in urban Africa - quantitative and qualitative food security studies as well as studies on hybrid and dynamic postcolonial foodways - address these relationships.

The following section was moved from introduction (previously section 1.6) While some of the food security studies in Southern Africa have incorporated social and cultural aspects of foodways, they have done so in a superficial manner. The extensive quantitative African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN) baseline survey of low-income areas in eleven cities in southern Africa (Frayne, Crush & McCordic 2017), for example, includes culturally appropriate foodstuffs, such as offals and roots and tubers in its questions. However, the function of culturally appropriate food options is to analyse the nutritional diversity in participants' diets, which overlooks the meanings that they have for the participants. The survey also makes a distinction between different types of markets (formally regulated supermarkets and informal shops, markets and street food stalls) and includes a diverse range of non-market food sourcing options, such as urban agriculture and social support systems that include community food kitchens, food remittances and receiving, sharing or borrowing food from neighbours. Yet, their cultural and social importance is overlooked in favour of the economic functions they provide.

Using the same AFSUN survey, this dynamic, for instance, becomes apparent when Battersby (2012) describes the food sourcing strategies of low-income households in Cape Town in South Africa. She notes that respondents purchased the majority of their daily food supplies at informal food outlets. She describes that the reasons behind this relate to the geography of the city

(segregation, lengthy commuting times, safety) and precarious employment. For example, small quantities at informal stalls are more affordable, whereas bulk buying at supermarkets makes one a prone crime target. Travel times of over three hours per day further make shopping impossible and street food at transport hubs convenient. In this way, everyday practical and economic considerations thus predominantly determine people's relation to informal food outlets, while social and cultural aspects are overlooked and may equally play an important role. This example shows how quantitative studies of food consumption do not recognise the intricate and contradictory ways people develop and foster a diverse range of relationships with their food and systems of food provisioning.

There are several qualitative studies on the social and cultural aspects of food in Africa. Yet, not all of them capture complex and myriad social and cultural food relationships, as evidenced by several in-depth qualitative studies of food in urban Africa that understand people's relation to food disproportionately through the lens of vulnerability and economic motivations. In work that is also based on the AFSUN survey set in Epworth, a high-density neighbourhood in Harare, Tawodzera (2011) includes daily experiences with food by using interviews in studying households' vulnerability to food security. The aim of the interviews is to capture the diversity of household food insecurity experiences, but, negating social and cultural meanings, the interviews focus on how economic aspects such as income, food prices, tenure status and household structure impact the ability to obtain enough and nutritious food.

In her book *Hungry Season*, Joubert (2012) takes a similar angle in qualitatively studying experiences of food poverty and malnutrition in urban South Africa. The focus of Flynn's (2005) ethnographic portrait of food provisioning in the city of Mwanza, Tanzania equally lies on experiences of food poverty. Even though the precarious living circumstances of low-income urbanites play a significant role in explaining their relationships to food, what these studies have in common is that they fail to acknowledge other types of

relationships to food that are also prominent in economically adverse circumstances.

Other studies on socio-cultural foodways in urban Africa, however, have in an in-depth fashion demonstrated that foodways are the result of complex social, cultural and political factors on personal and structural levels. They complicate food security's narrow economic focus because they go beyond economic relationships to food. They understand foodways as socially and culturally embedded in society and point out that people cultivate, besides economic ones, various social, cultural and political relationships with food. Abrahams (2007), for example, highlights cultural and religious modes of consumption in Johannesburg. She found that residents of the culturally diverse Lenasia township preferred to buy foodstuffs from neighbourhood farmers and local vendors because, besides convenience, they cater to their cultural preferences and palates, even though they were the more expensive food sourcing option.

In this vein, others have demonstrated that patterns of food consumption cannot be attributed to purchasing power and resource access alone because food is closely intertwined with people's identity. Based on participatory group discussions in Malawi's capital Blantyre, Riley and Dodson (2016) argue that where diets are certainly shaped by economic factors and ecological capacities, they are equally intricately bound up with spatial, gendered and generational identities. Based on qualitative research in a village in southern Tanzania, Ohna, Kaarhus and Kinabo (2012) highlight that foodways are also dependent on how people use food to express and identify their own and others' ethnic group membership, status and social distinction.

As exemplified by anthropological studies elsewhere in the Global South (see Solomon (2016) in India, Yates-Doerr (2012) in Guatemala, McLennan et al. (2018) in the Pacific Islands, Wilson in Cuba (2014) and Trinidad and Tobago (2013), Wilk (1999) in Belize), another strand of research on the socio-cultural

aspects of food in urban Africa highlights people's agency in creating, maintaining and adjusting rich culinary cultures on the basis of past, and in the face of current, societal changes and influences. These studies look at how foodways in postcolonial settings are characterised by diverse cuisines and culinary fusions of 'traditional' foods that are part of an indigenous cuisine and 'modern' foods that were, and still are, consumed and introduced by former colonial powers. In a similar vein, I discuss in Chapter 6 how these categories are produced and enacted in urban Zimbabwe. I also show how people navigate this binary culinary colonial inheritance.

In rural Kenya, Noack & Pauw (2015) argue that, in addition to people's economic and physical considerations, food behaviour and the composition of meals should be understood in the context of symbolic associations of certain ingredients and preservation techniques with social status. An example from their study is that white maize, which is the basis for *ugali* (a thick maize porridge), was associated with a higher status than the more nutritious earth coloured *ugali* that consisted of a mix of tubers, local grains and milk. Participants regarded white carbohydrates as the materialisation of modernity and urbanization, a view that can be traced back to the introduction and consumption of refined staples by colonisers and people in power (Mango and Hebinck 2004).

Freidberg (2003) and Koenig (2006) in their studies on urban Burkina Faso and Mali show how dietary norms and practices consist of an amalgamation of historical spatial and ecological influences. As opposed to Raschke and Cheema (2007) who present a simplistic narrative of the eradication of traditional food habits in East Africa as a result of colonial and neo-colonial forces, Freidberg and Koenig both argue that the countries' cuisines can be seen as hybrid. Hybrid refers to the ways in which new foodways have been adopted from, and transformed on the basis of, experiences of colonialism and national and global (neoliberal) agro-food policies, while at the same time, local food practices have remained present. In Burkina Faso, baguettes and

‘French’ vegetables (for example, haricot vert) and French ways of preparing them have become additional elements in the local diet, alongside the long-time domestically produced staple of millet. In Mali, quintessential local meal structures (a local grain like *fonio* with sauce poured over it) blend in with influences from South Africa, Nigeria, Europe and Asia (a garden salad, soft drinks and processed snacks).

That foodways are dynamic, hybrid and adapt to societal change has also been found by Legwegoh and Hovorka, who counter the artificial and binary categorisation of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ diets by showing that urban residents in Gaborone engage in a constant process of appropriating aspects of diverse food cultures to form their own. The observation that food habits are dynamic, fluid and hybridised has also been documented among the Asante in the city of Kumasi in Ghana. Clark (2014, p. 48) finds that shifts in food practices demonstrate how perceived traditions can be radically transformed without losing their traditional status. She emphasises the role of people’s agency over culinary practices in explaining this:

> Asante make room within their concept of traditional culture for innovation and compromise, which they see as protecting its continuity and autonomy as long as Asante people remain in charge of the changes.

Even though set in a rural setting, Holtzman (2003) similarly draws attention to people’s agency in the adoption and indigenisation of tea among the Samburu group in Kenya. He demonstrates that they have selectively integrated this novel black drink in accordance with their own changing economic realities, symbolic meanings of food and everyday community politics.

In her study of the uptake of what is viewed as ‘modern’ food in the city of Cotonou in Benin, Elwert-Kretschmer (2001) brings nuance to the idea of a common urban hybrid cuisine by pointing out that culinary integration takes place in different degrees and in different ways, depending on gender, age

and class. For example, with the exception of bread and Maggi cubes, households with a lower income do not use 'modern' ingredients like carrots, rice, potatoes and lettuce in their daily food practices or at special occasions as much as more privileged households.

Similar to these studies on hybrid and dynamic postcolonial foodways, in this thesis I also link political–economic changes over time, originating from local, national and international scales, to understand the process in which the socio-cultural meanings of contemporary foodways take shape. Another similarity with these studies is that by researching the complexity and subtleties of meanings and practices surrounding good food in daily life, I equally complicate narrow economic and physical conceptualisations of people's relationships with food, as perpetuated by the food security paradigm. What this thesis adds to the existing literature that acknowledges socio-cultural conceptualisations of food and dynamic and hybrid cuisines in Africa is that this thesis considers the role of socio-ecological relations in foodways and the relation between intersectional gendered food roles and valorisations of food.

2.3 The concept of socio-ecological relations

Robbins (2012, p. 12) defines political ecology as 'empirical, research-based explorations to explain linkages in the condition and change of social–environmental systems, with explicit consideration of relations of power'. The framework not only emphasises the political dimensions of socio-ecological systems, but also how knowledge and practices, and the processes through which these are produced, form and are formed by economic and political processes. Political ecologists argue that unequal power relations in these processes lead to situations where the costs and benefits associated with ecological processes and environmental change are unequally distributed among actors.

The idea that nature cannot be understood separately from politics implies that nature and society are co-produced. For example, agricultural ecosystems and human transformations of these are embedded in historically situated social, economic and political structures and institutions. This idea forms the basis for one of the two main theoretical foundations of political ecology scholarship: socio-ecological relations (or also called socio-natures). The concept of socio-ecological relations navigates the dialectical relationship between nature and society: in other words, it captures how nature and society constantly co-evolve and are entangled with one another. The underlying assumption is that the social and natural realms are not discrete, but relational: they are in constant interaction and transformation – in a constant state of becoming (Robbins 2012). This idea shows commonalities with relational geography, a field to which I return below.

In essence, food embodies this connection. Food involves 'a mixture of the organic and the inorganic, the material and the symbolic, and the social and the natural' (Murdoch 2005, p. 160). Landscapes, species of plants and animals have been altered through technologies such as plant breeding and agriculture in order to be transformed for one of human's primary needs: eating. For example, through human cultivation, indigenous people in the Americas domesticated maize from a wild grass called *teosinte* (Osborne 2017). The plant became a staple food in Southern Africa during the development of colonial commercial and industrial agriculture in the twentieth century (McCann 2005). While this example of how humans and nature are inseparable applies to countless foods, I used maize because, as will become clear throughout this thesis, it is a central component of the participants' diets.

The findings in this thesis show that ideas and practices of good food cannot be seen separately from socio-ecological systems. Chapter 5 is concerned with how people create a narrative of good food that is based on ideas of natural and traditional food that comes from local ecosystems. Chapter 6 focuses on how the political governance of the socio-ecological systems stands in relation to foodways and this narrative of good food, starting from

the colonial period to present-day.

Geographers have studied this co-production of nature and society to understand the agricultural and food system as well as foodways (Faus & Marsden 2017). For example, Freidberg's (2004) research on postcolonial ties in the industrial and global fresh food supply chain, provides another example of a study that examines the power-laden processes of how nature and society are materially and discursively co-productive of one another. She shows how socially constructed labels of what makes safe and high-quality food, brought about by European food scares and food safety controversies in the UK and France, are imposing ecological production standards and determining agroecological landscapes in Anglophone and Francophone Africa.

Relatedly, Goodman (2004) illustrates how nature and society co-evolve in the commodification of Fair Trade food products. He argues that this process takes place, firstly, through the moment of socio-ecological production, which is situated within specific agroecological contexts and peasant histories. Commodification, secondly, occurs through the moment of discursive/semiotic production, where meaningful and politicised discourses of certain food categories are constructed. In the case of Fair Trade, these are driven by consumer and capitalist forces. Even though the focus of this thesis is not the commodification of food, this line of thinking illuminates how ecological food production systems are subject to social processes of meaning-making. In Chapter 5, I study how my participants discursively act upon agroecological contexts and peasant histories in their rural homeland through a narrative that creates the categories of natural and traditional good food.

2.4 Conceptualising scale: the politics of scales

Besides the concept of socio-ecological relations, the other main theoretical foundation of political ecology scholarship is an analysis of the politics of scale. The linking of place-specific conditions to different scales and processes and the functioning of power dynamics within such connections

constitutes a key aspect of the political ecology framework (Neumann 2005). A multi-scalar analysis is instrumental to this study because it allows me to recognise that relations of power originating at different scales of analysis intersect with the diverse relationships that urban residents have with food. It illuminates how processes operating at different interconnected scales converge, can operate simultaneously in one place and become integrated in ideas about good food and everyday food practices. A political ecology approach reveals that people's foodways are not an apolitical phenomenon tied to a single scale unit, such as the household. The value of such an enlarged scope of analysis becomes clear in the empirical chapters. Chapter 6, for example, addresses how a value system borne out of the colonial governance of socio-ecological relations through racial spatial and environmental ordering can be placed in relation to urbanites' contemporary meanings and practices of good food.

A prominent example of how the interconnections between nature and society in food and agriculture are governed by political and economic processes at different scales is Sidney Mintz' (1985) study about the global connectedness of sugar. He shows how nature and society become entangled in complex networks between the UK and its Caribbean colonies. Mintz demonstrates that the cultivation of certain crops in postcolonial societies, such as cane sugar in the Caribbean, is related to biophysical properties of the environment in which food is produced and human's innate propensity for sweetness, but it is also determined by historical economic and political power. He argues that imperial political and economic power between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries forged a relationship between, on the one hand, the British growing industrial economy and the need for cheap calories for the working class in the form of sugar and, on the other, the establishment of export-oriented agro-industrial plantation economies in the Caribbean. As I also describe in Chapter 4 and elaborate on in Chapter 6, this type of multi-scalar analysis reveals that certain foods that are valued as good food, such as processed and branded mealie meal (maizemeal) from supermarkets, are

in fact connected to economic drivers and a politics of conquest and control within a colonial dual agricultural system.

Taking a multi-scalar approach in studying Malawians' reliance on maize, Bezner Kerr (2014) provides another example. She demonstrates how forces thought to be operating at different scales unite in shaping smallholder agricultural knowledge and practices related to sorghum and finger millet. She concludes that the intersection among gender relations and decision-making at the household level, agricultural labour, gendered access to resources, migration, colonial and (neoliberal) postcolonial government and international policies has shifted cropping patterns and has shaped agrobiodiversity, environmental knowledge and smallholder farmer resilience over time in Malawi. Her work establishes the importance of a feminist political ecology approach by considering how complex everyday social and gender relations on a personal and household level stand in relation to wider structural processes. Such an approach is integral to understanding foodways of urban Zimbabweans too, as I explain below in relation to feminist political ecology and in Chapter 7 when considering how gender roles stemming from the colonial period stand in relation to the provision of good food in contemporary urban households.

2.4.1 Theorising scale in human geography

Ideas about scale in political ecology often reflect the continuing debates on scale in human geography. The difference is that political ecologists specifically focus on connecting the scales at which socio-ecological processes take place (Rangan & Kull 2009). Since the 1980s, the concept of scale has been extensively debated in the human geography literature. Geographers have argued that scale does not constitute an absolute, a priori, hierarchy of spatial units (for example, local, regional, national, global). The qualities of a scale – its function, extent or interactions with other scales – are not inherently given. Any given scale is, rather, produced by power-laden social and political processes (Smith 1984; Paasi 2004). Scale is, therefore, socially produced. Different scales are defined by political struggles in

particular places and times (Marston 2000) With this in mind, Born and Purcell (2006, p. 197) argue that 'the best way to think about scale is not as an ontological entity with particular properties but as a strategy, as a way to achieve a particular end'.

Related to this point that scales are strategic and political, geographers have argued that scale is simultaneously fluid and fixed. On the one hand, scales are fluid and constantly fluctuate, because social actors produce and reproduce them (Swyngedouw 1997) (for example, the devolution of national state functions to local governing bodies [Raco 2003]). On the other, scales are also fixed in nature, because once scalar constellations are constructed, they can become incorporated into hegemonic economic and political structures for extended periods. While still accepting that scales are socially produced, such scalar arrangements have nonetheless (material) implications for different groups in society (Smith 1993). Unequal power relations lead some actors to benefit significantly more than others.

A focal point in the literature on scale is that scale is relational and it is constituted of networks. While recognising that the power-laden social production of scale makes some scales dominant (national) and others subordinate (local), this means that each scale has a relationship to the other. They are intertwined in networks and flows and embedded in each other (Amin 2004; Massey 1994, 2005; Thrift 2004; Taylor 2004). These ideas stem from a large body of (post-structuralist) literature about conceptualising space in relational terms, or as it is also called, relational geography (see Murdoch 2005; Jones 2009 for an overview). Summarising these three theoretical tenets on scale, Born and Purcell (2006, p. 198) reflect on what these debates mean for geographic research on scale: it 'should interrogate how the interrelationships among scales are fixed, unfixed, and refixed by particular social actors pursuing specific political, social, economic, and ecological goals'.

Many of the discussions in human geography about scale are closely

intertwined with ideas about place and space. Without going into depth into the vast literature about these concepts, I highlight here that when scales are regarded as relational, it makes places also relational. Places can be described as spaces created by humans' intentions, experiences and actions. In this sense, a place constitutes a space with meanings and objectives ascribed to it (Yuan 1977). Several authors in the relational geographies literature (Castree 2004; Massey 1994; Swyngedouw & Heynen 2003) who conceptualise space as connective, open, networked, unfinished, fluid and always becoming have argued that places 'may be more usefully viewed as nodes in networks than as discrete and autonomous bounded spatial units' (Cummins et al. 2007, p. 1827).

The notion that places are constructed from assigning meaning to space is relevant to this thesis because this forms the basis of the traditional and natural food narrative that is the subject of Chapter 5. The chapter shows that this narrative of good food is spatially linked to and embedded in practices and ways of being, knowing and living in the ancestral homeland (Ulloa 2015). The ancestral homeland is a place where memories and current experiences of society nature relations are inscribed. As I show in Chapter 4, this place, and thereby the meanings and practices attached to it, is part of a multi-scalar network, as it is connected at different scales to several colonial and post-independence political processes.

2.4.2 Theorising scale in political ecology

In what follows, I use a foundational political ecology text on environmental degradation in the Global South to highlight two main aspects of the debates on scale in the domain of political ecology. I explain how these two aspects – that scale is process based, and that scale is relational and networked – apply to this thesis.

Even though several other geographers, sociologists and anthropologists started to critically examine the dominant technocentric and managerial approach to environmental degradation in local communities in the Global

South in the 1980s, Piers Blaikie and Harold Brookfield's (1987) research on the politics of soil erosion and land degradation in the Global South is regarded as one of the foundational texts of the political ecology approach (Rocheleau 2008). Where earlier studies on this topic only considered 'place-based' factors as causes for degradation, Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) linked resource use and environmental degradation to wider political and economic processes and structures at different spatial and temporal scales (Neumann 2005).

Using a multi-scalar analysis of biophysical and socio-economic phenomena in place, central to Blaikie and Brookfield's study is the 'chain of explanation' approach. With this approach, they uncovered a complex chain of connections that linked 'different geographic scales and hierarchies of socio-economic organisations (for example, person, household, village, region, state, world)' (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987, p. 17). The section below provides an example of how they regard scale in a hierarchical manner, with each scale being characterised by particular processes. The assumption that there are a priori local, national and global processes is criticised later in this chapter. Blaikie and Brookfield (1987, p. 68) argue that:

> Frequently a comprehensive enquiry into land management will require an approach which employs a nested set of scales: local and site specific where individuals or small groups make the relevant decisions; the regional scale involving more generalized patterns of physiographic variation, types of land use, and property relations and settlement history; the national scale in which the particular form of class relations give the economic, political and administrative context for land-management decisions; and the international scale, which, in the most general manner, involves almost every element in the world economy, particularly through the commoditization of land, labour and agricultural production.

They, furthermore, recognised that there were asymmetries of power between the different scales and aimed to integrate politics – questions of access and control over resources – occurring on different scales into the study of human-nature relations.

Blaikie and Brookfield have been criticised for their failure to regard scale as process based. Peet & Watts (1996) argue that, because the focus lies disproportionally on scales, the work leads to explanations that seem to apply under all empirical circumstances. There is a lack of clarity as to how and why some factors became causes of environmental degradation. According to them, Blaikie and Brookfield's approach lacks a particular theory of production or political economy to explain environmental degradation. Criticising environmental justice literature, Swyngedouw and Heynen (2003) similarly emphasise the importance of considering how social, political and economic processes and power relations shape uneven socioecological conditions, which are they stress, integral to the performance of a capitalist political-economic system. Their criticism stems from their arguments for a process-based approach to scales (Swyngedouw 2004). Swyngedouw (2004, p. 26) explains:

> Social life is process based, in a state of perpetual change, transformation and reconfiguration (see Harvey 1996). Starting analysis from a given geographical scale, such as the local, regional, national or global, seems to me, therefore, to be deeply antagonistic to apprehending the world in a dynamic, process-based manner. This has profound implications for the significance of spatial scale. I conceive scalar configurations as the outcome of socio-spatial processes that regulate and organise social power relations.

This means that to explain conceptions of good food and inequalities in people's ability to consume good food, it is not enough to merely evaluate what happens at the local, the regional, and the global scale and consider the interlinkages and power relations between these scales. The structural drivers of the creation of these scales, their connections and politics also need to be considered.

While he does not explicitly use political ecology theories, Sam Moyo's work (2000; 2011a; 2011b; Moyo & Chambati 2013) on the agrarian political economy in Zimbabwe follows a similar approach to studying the power-laden politics of socio-environmental relations on different scales. Committed to

radical agrarian and land reform addresses social justice, inequality and poverty, he analyses structural political economy features of agrarian change in combination with on-the-ground empirical studies. Just as a process-based approach to scale, his research focuses on the structural processes (e.g. capitalism, colonialism) that create differentiated socio-ecological processes and practices in agrarian Zimbabwe. In Chapter 4, I further situate his work in this study by considering how during colonialism, racially divided spatial configurations were created in the interest of white minority and foreign capital, and thereby for the successful functioning of the colonial capitalist political economy. The organisation of the labour force and the creation of a dual agricultural system during colonialism led to specific urban–rural connections that play a role in the construction of a local food narrative.

The line of reasoning in a process-based approach to scale prompts Jones (2009, p. 488) to ask: 'does relationally constructed space matter, or should it simply be reduced to process?'. I argue that studying scales and their relation to socioecological relations in foodways should involve recognition of both, a point that I come back to in due course.

Keeping in mind the relational conceptualisations of scale in the human geography literature mentioned earlier, another point of contention surrounding Blaikie and Brookfield's work is that the chain of explanation approach does not recognise scale as relational. It has come under scrutiny because it accepts an order of pre-given scalar categories and overlooks the need to break out of such seemingly objective hierarchical 'containers'. Social, political and ecological processes should, rather, be understood in terms of relationships (Zimmerer and Bassett 2003). Critics of similar approaches to hierarchical scale in political ecology often draw on Latour's work (Watts & Scales 2015) and point out that these processes are 'never captured by notions of levels, layers, territories, spheres, categories, structures, and systems' (Latour 1996, p. 3).

Whatmore and Thorne (1997), for example, use Latour's actor-network theory to break down the global–local binary in global industrial food corporations. They explain that Latour's actor-network theory is about 'the elaboration of a topological spatial imagination concerned with tracing points of connection and lines of flow, as opposed to reiterating fixed surfaces and boundaries' (Whatmore and Thorne 1997, p. 237). This means that scales should be seen as networks that are always in the making, instead of always already systemically constituted.

Whatmore and Thorne (1997, p. 236) explain the meaning of a networked and relational conception of scales using the example of global industrial food corporations:

> There is nothing 'global' about such corporations and bureaucracies *in themselves*, either in terms of their being disembedded from particular contexts and places or of their being in some sense comprehensive in scale and scope. Rather, their reach depends upon intricate interweavings of *situated* people, artifacts, codes, and living things and the maintenance of particular tapestries of connection across the world.

Unlike Blaikie and Brookfield's idea of a 'nested set of scales', a hierarchical and rigid scalar order where higher scales determine action at lower scales, Whatmore and Thorne highlight the simultaneity of social life, which is at once global and local, and the embeddedness of social institutions, processes, and knowledges, which are situated in, and rely on, places, things and the political competence and social agency of individuals. For example, the globalness of a 'global' corporate food giant is made out of the social and political agency of people acting locally. There is, thus, no scalar category that can describe a food corporation, or anything else for that matter. This kind of relational reasoning applied to scales seems to make scalar categories superfluous. It is for this reason that some geographers have argued for the complete elimination of scale as a concept in human geography (Marston, Jones III & Woodward 2005).

While I acknowledge scales are socially constructed, I do not disregard them as a concept to analyse socio-ecological systems. In this thesis I argue that the concept of scale matters because practical and bounded spaces and scales have been institutionalised through particular struggles and have become identified as discrete territories in the spheres of economics, politics and culture (Jones 2009, p. 501). In other words, scales are not redundant in analysing socio-environmental relations because they highlight (political) projects of scale making. Using a political ecology framework, Gezon (2005; 2006) follows this line of argument in her study on global–local relations in struggles around environmental conservation in Madagascar. She argues that different scalar domains are, besides interconnected and historically situated cultural constructions, 'constantly made, negotiated, and transformed as people interact in specific times and places' (Gezon 2005, p. 14). 'Projects of scale making occur', she further points out, 'as people negotiate the extent of their political influence and material impact of the decisions they make' (Gezon 2005, pp. 147–48).

This thesis, however, shows that projects of scale making are not merely political, as, through the strategic use of the local scale in the good food narrative presented in Chapter 5, the local becomes a cultural construct and symbol. Where Chapter 5 shows how the local scale becomes fixed through socio-ecological imaginaries of good food, Chapter 6 shows that scales are fluid and unfixed. In Chapter 6, it becomes clear how the younger generation negotiates and redefines the meaning of the local scale, because it represents a society that has repeatedly rejected them.

The main point I take away from relational conceptualisation of scale is that scales should be understood as functioning within a non-hierarchical network. Spiegel's (2017) study on the use of environmental impact assessments in the realm of small-scale mining in Zimbabwe shows what relational thinking means for understanding the power dynamics surrounding the politics of socio-ecological systems. Instead of understanding power relations in a

hierarchical and one-directional fashion and in terms of domination and subordination, Spiegel (2017) argues that the politics of resource conflicts should be understood through a pluralistic lens that recognises the various co-existing and shifting forms of power originating from actors (for example, small-scale gold miners, EIA consultants and government officials) at different scales.

I use the idea of relational scale in this thesis particularly in Chapter 6, where I study how the younger generation exerts its agency in contesting the 'good food is local and traditional' narrative outlined in Chapter 5. They acknowledge that influences from several scales beyond the local are simultaneously present in their direct environment. In the same chapter, I also show that the agricultural and food practices in the ancestral homeland, which are presented as local by the good food narrative in Chapter 5, have been shaped by political power originating at various interconnected scales: national policies from the colonial and post-independence state, local networks of patronage and family histories of migration.

2.5 Feminist political ecology

Gender is at the heart of food-related knowledge and practices, which are, in turn, embedded in local socio-ecological systems such as kitchen gardens or indigenous agroecological farming systems. My empirical findings show that gender relations play a central role in imagining and providing for good food (see Chapter 7). A feminist political ecology (FPE) lens is therefore crucial in this thesis.

Since the 1990s feminists have raised questions about the role of gender in political ecology. A main question was, and still is: how do gendered relations affect the co-constitution of society and nature and its interscalar power dynamics? Feminist political ecology provides a lens to look at varying gendered environmental knowledges, practices and responsibilities (Momsen 2007) as well as men's and women's differentiated access to and control of

environmental resources and socio-political processes (Carney 1993; Razavi 2003). An example of a core question in FPE literature is how gender relations in family authority structures and conjugal relations shape (environmental) resource access and control. Many earlier studies conducted in the Global South have, for example, highlighted women's dependency on male family members for access to resources (including land, labour and capital) (see Elmhirst 2015).

The focal point of a gender-sensitive analysis in political ecology has shifted from researching how gender roles have an impact on environmental resource access, knowledge and practices to investigating how gender subjectivities, ideologies and identities are produced, employed and contested (Elmhirst 2011). This reflects post-structural approaches to gender, in which gender roles are understood not to be fixed, but socially constructed. Even though they are prescribed by society, they are performed and constantly negotiated (Butler 2004).

Following this line of thinking, feminist political ecologists have shown that gender relations are historically and geographically contingent and constantly negotiated (Gururani 2002; Harris 2006; Nightingale 2011; Sultana 2009). Tschakert (2013) has, for example, investigated how ecological changes in landscapes due to climate change lead to renegotiation of gender categories. In her ethnographic study on rural Nepal, Nightingale (2011) shows how different overlapping gender and caste subjectivities are produced and negotiated through everyday activities socio-ecological systems, such as forest harvesting and agricultural work. For example, the act of cutting timber in the forest signified you are a man belonging to a certain caste. Even though not specifically using an FPE framework, in Zimbabwe, Mutopo (2015) shows that changes in the agricultural system in Zimbabwe through the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) in the form of re-peasantisation has facilitated women to participate in land acquisition, new agri-business activities and other socioeconomic activities such as trade and value addition. In

understanding women as strategic actors, highlighting their agency and the changing nature of their roles, she critiques research on women and development that presents women in Africa as subordinated to patriarchal systems or overly dependent on donor funding (Mutopo 2015).

The FPE framework brings to the fore how women in their daily food practices strategise within concrete constraints that they are facing; for Zimbabwean women this includes patriarchal power within Zimbabwean households and society. In Chapter 7, I address how the provision of good food in a household depends on gendered power relations and a gendered division of labour in the household and the socio-ecological systems the household uses. As also becomes clear in Chapter 7, a gender-sensitive analysis shows that foodways in a Zimbabwean household are partially shaped by how 'forms of patriarchy present women with distinct 'rules of the game' and call for different strategies to maximise security and optimise life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression' (Kandiyoti 1988, p. 274). I further use FPE's line of thinking about gendered relations in socio-ecological systems and their fluid/contested nature in Chapter 7, where I address the relations between gender, race and economic and political processes originating from different scales.

2.5.1 Understanding scales in feminist political ecology

Considering a central aspect of political ecology is studying the co-constitution of and interlinkages between scales, a relevant question is what constitutes a feminist conceptualisation of scale? Adopting a feminist political ecology perspective means taking into consideration the role of gendered power relations at different scales (including the body, the kitchen and the global) and in the co-constitution of scales (Bezner Kerr 2014; Christie 2006; Truelove 2011). Feminist political ecologists have critiqued political ecology for treating scales as black boxes, meaning objects or systems that are understood in terms of inputs and outputs and of which the internal structure or workings are unknown. Households, but also what has been called

‘community’ or ‘local’, tend to be understood as homogenous units with a cohesive organisation and coherent shared interests (Rocheleau 2008). Yet, household and community gender relations are an important and often overlooked place for politics. Feminist political ecologists have complicated such common units and levels of analysis by considering the complex and multifaceted gendered power relations within and between households (Townsend 1993).

By opening up black boxes of scales of analysis, feminist political ecologists have highlighted less visible scales such as the body (Hayes Conroy & Hayes Conroy 2013; Gururani 2002; Sultana 2009; Truelove 2011) and the kitchen (Christie 2006) and the interdependent scalar connections between and beyond these. An example in the realm of food and agriculture is Hovorka’s (2006) study on urban poultry farming in Botswana, in which she illuminates how women redefine prescribed gender roles at the ‘local’ level due to changes originating at the national level. She shows that, in the context of agrarian restructuring towards commercial agricultural production at the national level, women capitalised on, and thereby renegotiated, their traditional roles and responsibilities associated with poultry production. While gender inequality persisted, the new claims they made over land through commercial poultry farming, which the agrarian restructuring on the national level facilitated, offered them ways for economic and social advancement that were previously inaccessible to them.

It is, however, important to be mindful that gender should not be solely affiliated with seemingly ‘closer’ and more intimate and everyday scales like the local. Elmhirst (2011) points out that gender ought to be seen as a constitutive force at all scales of analysis. Returning back to the idea that scales exist simultaneously, this means that power relations at presumably larger scales such as global are also coloured by gender and produced and sustained in an intimate fashion.

In this thesis, I address the relation between gender and the co-constitution of scales in Chapter 7, when I consider how discourses and practices around domesticity created by the colonial state and continued by the postcolonial state influence gendered roles and responsibilities in providing for good food. Here the importance of intersectionality and the notion of multi-layered subjects becomes clear, as the domesticity discourses and practices had a clear racial component.

2.5.2 Towards an intersectional conception of gender

Another aspect of feminist political ecology's understanding of gender is that it is intersectional. This means that gender in socio-environmental processes intersects with other subjectivities. In this vein, in what is considered a key text in feminist political ecology, Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter and Wangari (1996) write that gender is 'a critical variable in shaping resource access and control, interacting with class, caste, race, culture, and ethnicity to shape processes of ecological change, the struggle of men and women to sustain ecologically viable livelihoods (Rocheleau et al. 1996, p. 4)'. Intersectionality recognises that women and men are not homogeneous and undifferentiated social groups, as their gender intersects with other parts of their identities (Valentine 2007). In rural Zimbabwe, Mutopo (2015), for example, has emphasised that women are far from a homogenised group, as differences in class, marital status, religious beliefs, life cycles, and education among women influence the economic and material assets, such as land investments, each woman strives to attain within their land-based livelihoods.

Intersectionality highlights the need to conceptualise people 'as inhabiting multiple and fragmented identities, constituted through social relations that include gender, but also include class, religion, sexuality, race/ethnicity and postcoloniality' (Elmhirst 2011, p. 131). This means that not only gender, but also these intersecting subjectivities, affect people's relationship with food and the socio-ecological systems it is produced in. While many feminist political ecologists acknowledge the need for intersectionality, it is not always applied in practice (Mollett & Faria 2013). Nightingale (2010) admits that it is easier to

create a more coherent narrative by using either gender, ecology or class as the central object of analysis. She aims to overcome this oversight by studying how subjectivities (gender, caste, class) are produced from the exercise of power within socio-natural networks in forest environments in Nepal.

Six years earlier, Sundberg (2004) paved the way by looking at the ways in which gender and race intersect and are co-constituted in conservation encounters between international development agencies and the local population in Guatemala. She argues that identities should not be understood as homogeneous and fixed, but as 'constituted through language and disciplining institutional practices that are dynamic, constantly changing, yet time- and place- specific.' (Sundberg 2004, p. 46). Through unequal power relations in conservation encounters, identities are brought into being and enacted in time and place. For example, a European-led project aimed at documenting women's use of medicinal plants that framed women as indigenous and as possessors of indigenous knowledge led some of the women involved to (re)configure their racial identity. An intersectional conception of gender thus involves identities that are 'in-the-making' and always in transition.

Mollet & Faria (2013) argue that feminist political ecology must theorise gender in a complex and messy fashion, emphasizing a notion of gender that more explicitly addresses race, racialization and racism. Central to this is acknowledging the implications of the creation and dissemination of racial labels that were part of colonial and remain part of post-colonial racial orderings. Examples of the binary categories that have been constructed in this process are: savage/civilised, tradition/modern, customary/formal. In many instances, they have given whiteness as a racial category a 'hegemonic positioning' (Mollett Faria 2013, p. 118). For example, narratives that establish whiteness as synonymous to modernisation and progress are still evident in religious, development and globalisation discourses (Escobar 1995; 2011). Sundberg (2008) places such colonial and postcolonial racial ordering in

relation to socio-ecological systems. She regards the environment as a critical site in which racial hierarchies are constituted and naturalised during processes of colonialism, nationalism and capitalism in Latin America.

Zimbabwe's history also demonstrates that the construction of racial hierarchies during colonialism go hand in hand with the organisation and governance of human–environment relations. This becomes clear in Chapter 4 (context), where I discuss how colonisers deploy race in daily discourses and practices in relation to the environment. I show that the ordering of space (the city as white and rural areas as black), the allocation of natural resources (productive, high-potential farmland for whites and allocation of reserves for blacks), conceptions of appropriate natural resource management and thereby particular forms of agriculture (industrial, large-scale agriculture for whites and subsistence and conservation farming for blacks) were determined on the basis of race. In Chapter 6, I show how binary value judgements of food can be explained against the backdrop of this racial–environmental ordering.

2.6 Conclusion

The political ecology framework opens up the possibility to include in my analysis time, social relations and places that are not necessarily proximal to when and where foodways take place. The framework, and its feminist theorisation, allows me to embrace complexity stemming from ethnographic and qualitative research without losing sight of the explanatory power of structural relationships. The theoretical understandings of a politics of scale equip me to analyse the co-production of society and nature in foodways in a way that goes beyond thinking in terms of linear, vertical scalar hierarchies towards a political process based and relational approach to scale.

A feminist political ecology framework enables me to question assumptions of a priori role-based understanding to gender and highlight social constructions of, and everyday contestations around, gender roles in foodways.

Furthermore, its emphasis on intersectionality leads me to recognise that legacies of colonial racism and (colonial) patriarchies have shaped and continue to shape people's relationship to food and the socio-ecological contexts in which food is produced.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the choices and deliberations I have made before and during the design, execution and analysis of this dissertation. I explain why the methodology of this dissertation is suitable to address the main research of this thesis. I have adopted a qualitative approach to investigating how meanings and practices of good food stand in relation to socio-ecological, economic and political structures. I have carried out ethnographic participant observation and semi-structured interviews in Chitungwiza during a total of six months as well as interviews with Zimbabweans in Johannesburg during one month. As I explain further in this chapter, this thesis is mainly based on fieldwork conducted in Chitungwiza, but due to issues with my visa in Zimbabwe, I have had to shift the last month of my fieldwork to Johannesburg, where I interviewed Zimbabwean migrants. The following vignette that details a snapshot of my fieldwork experience in Chitungwiza offers an introduction to the context of this research and reveals the value of a qualitative approach to studying people's various relationships with food in urban Africa.

> ***Vignette: becoming a* muroora *(daughter-in-law) in Chitungwiza***
> In January 2017, four weeks into my stay with my family-in-law in Chitungwiza, I wrote the following in my fieldwork diary:
>
> I woke up and Amai (which means 'mother' in the local Shona language) told me that her grandmother passed away. I felt sad for the family. I also knew immediately what this meant. I had to take care of toddler Itai. His parents left for South Africa to look for jobs, so he stayed with his *gogo* and *sekuru,* grandmother and grandfather. I also vaguely suspected that, as the only woman in the household at that point in time, I was now responsible for running domestic life. While she was ironing her clothes for the multiple-day funeral trip to the rural areas, Amai told me that Tendai, my teenage brother-in-law, was lying on her bed pretending to be ill. 'My life is over,' he had said to Amai, who then told me, 'He thinks he has to take care of Itai and do everything in the household hahaha'. I nervously laughed with her. Before I had time to ask her about my tasks in the coming days, she briskly walked towards her phone. Later that morning Amai repeated her phone conversation she had with her daughter Grace: 'We said to

each other, Sara came here with a purpose. God knew that this was going to happen. So he sent Sara'. There it was, a confirmation that I indeed was the one to oversee this whole household business.

Two days later into my role as the 'chief executive officer' of the household, I wrote this:

With unwashed hair, my clothes full of stains, trying to catch Guardian (the dog) who had escaped through the gate and while telling Itai to stop biting Simba (the other dog) in his fur, I was preparing the tomato sauce for dinner in the afternoon, as I still needed to buy diapers at the supermarket. I felt exhausted. Baba (father) walked in the kitchen and upon seeing the pots on the stove, he commented with an approving smile: '*Maswera sei?* (how is your afternoon?) You're very busy I see'. I quickly pretended as if I had everything under control, but I was on the brink of crying. '*Taswera* (my afternoon is fine). Yes, yes,' I murmured. I was completely overwhelmed and emotionally and physically exhausted because everyone assumed that I, as a woman, knew how to keep the household running. I didn't want him to see my emotions because such sensitive female matters are not a man's territory in Zimbabwe. I also didn't want him to have the idea that I was unhappy in his house or that another female family member had to come and stay with us because I couldn't handle it all.

Later that night when the stew and vegetables were almost ready, Baba said we would make the *sadza* (hot maize meal porridge) together. I was relieved because I had never actually cooked it myself. Baba knew that this part of the meal required the most skill, which he realised I had not mastered. In order to have a good meal, he had to step in and do something he had not done for more than thirty years. 'I still know how to do it from my early days in the police when I was a bachelor,' he told me while mixing some mealie meal with cold water to start the process.

When Amai returned later that week and listened to me recounting the days in her absence, she was especially amused to hear that Baba cooked *sadza.* She was also content that Baba and Tendai agreed everything went all right. It felt like I passed an imaginary test of becoming a woman in Zimbabwe, a seal of approval to take on the occupation of 'caring for', and to be their oldest son's wife and future mother to their grandchildren (fieldwork notes, 4 January 2017).

Figure 3.1 .An afternoon at home in Chitungwiza Source: photo taken by author, used with permission

3.2 My methodological approach to research

3.2.1 The value of a qualitative approach

As becomes evident in this vignette (I reflect on the gender dynamics of this encounter in Chapter 7), through performing embodied and emotional tasks (taking care of a child, cooking, cleaning, washing) in Chitungwiza, I gained an intimate understanding of the role of food as well as the physicality and gender and family dynamics involved in the functioning of the household. The vignette also highlights the main advantage of the highly embedded qualitative research approach that I adopted, as this approach allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the complexities and contradictions of foodways in everyday life in a research setting where not many 'outsiders' have resided. In what follows, I elaborate on other the other advantages.

The research encounter in the vignette also demonstrates that in order to research ideas and practices of good food, a qualitative approach is most suitable. Qualitative forms of enquiry allow the researcher to target the

'cultural, everyday and situated aspects of human thinking, learning, knowing, and acting' in relation to food in everyday life (Kvale and Brinkman 2009, p. 12). They create nuanced, vivid, detailed, rich, and in-depth narratives and descriptions (Rubin & Rubin 2005b) in their own way.

The qualitative methods of participant observation and interviews, which involved observing, and participating in, foodways and uncovering the social constructions surrounding food, offer a valid and sound methodology to study foodways from a geographical perspective. While a quantitative methodology would give insight into, for example, the degree that certain food practices take place or to what extent people hold certain values vis-à-vis foods, a qualitative approach provides an intimate understanding of food-related values, emotions and interpersonal dynamics. These are constantly changing, context- and time-dependant, messy, ambivalent and at times contradictory. It would therefore be misleading to fit these into quantifiable units that are representative of a certain identified population or to attempt to find out how the social world and human behaviour is governed by scientific laws and regularities. The value of the qualitative approach in this study, then, lies in the rigorous and deep understanding of a certain place and time. In this sense, this study is a case study, of which its merit lies in studying the particular, instead of making inferences to the general (Yin 2009, p. 15).

My fieldwork revolved around understanding the contextual and subjective nature of Zimbabweans' lives and food imaginaries and practices. I aimed to capture how participants understand the world from their perspective and how this subjectivity is related to wider social, economic and political processes. Crang and Cook (2007, p. 14) further explain what studying subjectivity entails:

> It is the ways in which people make sense of the events around them, and render these 'true' in their own terms, that is most revealing about how their/our lives are embroiled in larger, social, cultural, economic and political processes. Therefore, stories told in the research

> encounter are not simply to be regarded as means of mirroring the world, but as the means *through which it is constructed*, understood and acted out.

3.2.2 Research as a socially situated process

The vignette also reveals that the ways in which we can gain knowledge of the world through scientific practice occur within social, historical and material contexts and is accomplished by social actors (O'Reilly 2009). The relationships and interactions during fieldwork are shaped by the participant's and researcher's positionality and identities that involve different cultures, classes, genders, sexualities, (dis)abilities, generations, nationalities, skin colours, religions and more. They are also formed by material and practical circumstances, such as the setting and the recording devices, clothes and food present. What follows, then, is that the nature and development of relationships during fieldwork affect the understandings that emerge from them. Ultimately, empirical research is a dialogical process structured by both the researcher and the participant (England 1994).

The situation I describe in the vignette provides a case in point where my presence and my positionality as an 'outsider' in the family gave me insights in the role that gender plays in the division of labour in the household and in the provision of good food. I elaborate more on this in Chapter 7. The function of the vignette here is to show that the research process is inherently socially situated. Even though I was an outsider, I was expected to run the household based on the sole reason that I am a woman and daughter-in-law. Furthermore, the fact that Baba offered to cook *sadza*, because I was a novice in Zimbabwean cooking, demonstrates that the usual gender roles can be temporarily altered for the sake of having good food.

The notion that my research and the knowledge that it generates are socially and materially situated in various ways has implications for the choices I have made regarding the representation of knowledge. I believe that research is an embodied activity that unavoidably brings in the researcher's baggage, or, as

Agar (2008, p. 91) puts it, 'personal equation' – someone's identity, personality and knowledge. I therefore reflect on my positionality and how this affected the fieldwork setting when describing my methods later in this chapter. The vignettes and writings based on my fieldnotes that feature throughout this thesis also reflect this belief, as they clearly are written from my perspective. Additionally, for this reason, while foregrounding my participants' stories, I write in the first person so as to demonstrate that I am the one constructing the knowledge of this thesis.

3.2.3 The aim of knowledge creation

This thesis is a case study that looks at the uniqueness of a certain place and time. Rejecting that knowledge should always be extrapolated to, and used in, other settings, Hammersley (1992, p. 201) argues that case study research should be aimed at producing knowledge that contributes to the problem-solving capacities of people. Yet, in a postcolonial context where for centuries outsiders (for example, colonial settlers and international development organisations) have tried to come up with or dictate solutions to presupposed problems that the local population is facing, this idea should be treated in a nuanced and careful manner. As explained in the introduction, research about food consumption in urban areas in Zimbabwe and Africa has tended to focus on addressing the problem of food security. The onus of food security research lies on gaining knowledge to improve urbanites' ability to fulfil one of their basic, physical needs: eating a nutritious diet.

While such insights are also necessary, I have argued in the introduction that research should contribute to human flourishing instead of solely survival. With this in mind, with its highly embedded methodology, this thesis serves the purpose of creating a better understanding of how to reach a situation in which food not only provides energy and supports bodily functions in adequate ways, but is also regarded as 'good' because it contributes to people's human flourishing (food as a source of pleasure, belonging, love, affection, community, companionship, fulfilling relationships as well as self-

worth, self-esteem, respect, achievement and realisation of personal potential).

This leads to the main methodological contribution that this study offers. As also explained in the introduction and conceptual chapter, previous research of this nature in Zimbabwe has predominantly used quantitative methodologies, perhaps because this is perceived as more suitable for policy making, it is part of the dominant food security paradigm or because doing participant observation in a politically closed context like Zimbabwe is less feasible. This study contributes to existing methodologies used to study food relations, because it provides an intimate, complex and nuanced understanding of everyday foodways and the social constructions of various food relations in urban Africa.

3.3 Methods and positionality

As already explained, this study involves ethnographic participant observation and qualitative semi-structured interviews in Zimbabwe as well as the same type of interviews in Johannesburg. As I was not able to extend my visa in Zimbabwe anymore after having renewed it for five times and I still wanted to do more interviews to ensure that I had engaged with a range of different research participants, I decided to conduct interviews in Johannesburg. During April 2017, my last month of the seven-month period I had planned for fieldwork, I conducted interviews with Zimbabweans who had migrated to Johannesburg and had lived in a similar urban environment as Chitungwiza. Even though these participants were situated in Johannesburg, their views on and experiences with foodways in Zimbabwe are still valuable for this thesis because they have the same basis – growing up and living in urban Zimbabwe – from which they imagine good food and make decisions in their foodways as the Zimbabweans I spoke to in Chitungwiza.

The methodology of this study could be described as a multi-sited qualitative methodology. I would like to clarify this study is not a multi-sited ethnography.

As I explain further in this section, due to the improvised nature of conducting fieldwork in Johannesburg, I was only able to conduct interviews in Johannesburg. Considering I have not been able to immerse myself in the daily life of my participants, the fieldwork in Johannesburg does not classify as ethnography. Either way, it is, nevertheless, important to reflect on how the inclusion of participants' migration journeys in this thesis affects knowledge production on foodways.

It is important to acknowledge that the different location of Johannesburg means that participants' views may have been shaped by migrating to and living in South Africa. South Africa has a more industrial food system than Zimbabwe (Greenberg 2017) and Zimbabweans of low socio-economic status in South Africa, including those working in the service industry, are marginalised (Dube 2017) and subjected to xenophobia (Dzingirai et al. 2015). I have noticed, for example, that participants in South Africa have a stronger tendency to romanticise Zimbabwean food, perhaps because of their precarious position in South Africa and stronger need for feelings of belonging. The multi-sited nature of this study acknowledges that migration is interwoven in the fabric of daily life of Zimbabweans at home in Zimbabwe as well as abroad. Furthermore, the multi-sited study site allows for a spatial understanding of foodways and brings nuance and complexities surrounding the narrative that socio-ecological relations in foodways are local, as discussed in chapter 5. In the empirical chapters I have acknowledged which stories, quotes and participants originate from fieldwork in Johannesburg.

3.3.1 Ethnographic participant observation in Chitungwiza

I lived for a total of six months with my family-in-law in Chitungwiza to carry out ethnographic participant observation. My husband, who in this thesis is called Farai, and who I normally live together with in the UK, only stayed in Zimbabwe with the family and me for a few weeks during this time. During one month of preliminary fieldwork in August 2016 and another four months November 2016 to March 2017, I observed and participated in the daily

rhythms of the household. The following fragment that I wrote after my stay during the month of August provides an introduction into the household dynamics that I became a part of. It offers a window into the lives of a family that, just like many other families in Zimbabwe, are preoccupied with their children's school performance, are active in the church community and do everything they can to support their (extended) family. The description of the family also shows the need to become an economic migrant in South Africa, a weak healthcare system, dependency on remittances and that families are forced to cope with high unemployment levels and have to make a living in the informal economy.

Baba (meaning father in Shona), a former police agent and early pensioner, is the head of the household. A man of pride and tradition with a canny sense of humour and an open mind to have discussions with me about the things he takes for granted, like physically disciplining children, the existence of God, black magic and gender relations in the household. His wife Amai (meaning mother in Shona) is an active member of the church in Chitungwiza and most of the time enjoys having the role of caring wife and mother.

During my stay there was a coming and going of Amai and Baba's children. Two weeks into my stay, the second oldest son, Jeff, a health and safety officer who graduated from a local university returned from his work in the mines where he had not received his salary for a few months. He bought a truck to make some money transporting goods in the informal economy to save for his emigration to South Africa, 'to look for greener pastures,' he told me (fieldnotes, 19 August 2016). Katie, his wife and mother to their two-year-old child Itai, also arrived home after finishing her semester as a teacher in a rural region four hours away. As the daughter-in-law, she took over most of Precious's chores in the household and only rarely left the house. Precious was the cousin of Amai, who after Precious's parents passed away from AIDS, brought her into the family. Precious spent most of her days doing chores around the house.

After spending nearly two years hanging around at home, the third oldest son, Jerry, was preparing to go to university. Attending university was an opportunity granted to him by his eldest brother living in the UK. Tendai, the youngest son, came back from his last semester at his boarding school in the family's rural homeland, struggling with his disappointing grades and disappointed family. Then there was Gogo, the silent and observing grandmother who fell in a well in her rural village and came to stay in Chitungwiza for a few weeks to recover from her leg wound. When I returned in November, Jeff and a pregnant Katie had left for South Africa, leaving behind Itai. Precious also left to take care of still wounded Gogo who had returned to the village. As Jerry was now at university, Baba, Amai, Tendai, the two dogs and I occupied the house for the rest of the fieldwork period.

Ethnographic participant observation means that the researcher is immersed in a social setting for a longer period of time. He or she makes observations of the members in that setting, while participating to a certain extent in their daily activities (Bryman 2008, p. 402). It relies on action – laughing, talking, working, doing – and proactive perception – observing, listening, reading and even smelling (Ybema et al. 2009, p. 6). Bernard (2006) describes participant observation as 'stalking culture in the wild' (p. 344), meaning that a researcher immerses him oneself in a culture and learns to remove oneself from that immersion so that you can intellectualise what you have observed, place it into perspective and write about it convincingly.

According to Gold's (1958) categorisation of the roles that a participant observer can adjust to, I was a participant-as-observer. In this role, a researcher participates in people's lives and engages in regular interaction, which resonates to what influential anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1998) has called 'deep hanging out'. In practice, this means that I participated in and observed the daily activities of different individuals in my direct environment. I prepared food, ate food and carried out food-related chores in the household.

I also accompanied different family members as well as family friends and neighbours in activities and journeys that are associated with acquiring and eating food (going shopping for food at the local market or supermarket, borrowing food at neighbours).

While I let these instances simply run their course and many of the interactions during these activities were spontaneous, I also purposefully engaged in small talk. Such conversations gave me the opportunity to ask more targeted questions so as to gain a more specific understanding of certain aspects of foodways I wanted to know more about. I also incorporated biographical questions to elicit food-centred life histories (Counihan 2013). These provided insights into the ways participants' foodways and ideas and practices of good food changed over time.

3.3.2 Positionality: my role as a daughter-in-law yet researcher

At the start of my time in Chitungwiza, my family consented to me observing their foodways for the purpose of my research. Yet, despite the fact that they knew this was the reason for my stay, I remained first and foremost a *muroora*. Cuomo and Massaro (2016, p. 103) rightly contend that clarifying one's position as a researcher 'allows participants to imagine how the outside world would receive the stories they shared with the researchers'. Yet, being a family member it seemed impossible to create boundaries and, as Cuomo and Massaro put it, at times I had to 'work to present myself as an outsider'. So, in order to ameliorate the murkiness of my position, I reminded my environment at times about my research by making remarks such as: 'I think I will write about the fact that you said natural food originates from rural areas'.

The role of *muroora* was one that people in my environment openly offered me. As is evident from the vignette, within the household it was clear that I would help out with preparing food, doing groceries and the dishes. In the wider community, I became the adopted daughter-in-law of the family's neighbourhood and close-by shopping area. When I would walk to the shopping area, people would wave and shout 'Muroora!' (daughter-in-law).

Moreover, Amai made sure I was taken under the wings of her church's women's group, who happily advised me on how to deal with my husband and run a family. In principle, I fared well as a *muroora*. I genuinely like children, enjoy cooking and taking care of people. It was the intensity of it, the family politics, accepting gender inequalities and not having the freedom I was used to that made the 'daughter-in-lawing' sometimes challenging and emotionally and physically exhausting.

An ethical dilemma related to my positionality and role as a *muroora* yet researcher was that I was a privileged *muroora*: I had an income in the form of a scholarship and would return to the UK, to a life filled with conveniences. Given the unequal playing field, how could I expect to 'tag along' in food-related activities when my family were struggling and I had enough money? Faced with this quandary, I decided that I would communicate beforehand that, besides the long-term financial arrangements already in place, I would pay rent for my room and contribute a fixed amount to groceries each month. Apart from tasks in the household, I also helped out with high school exam preparation and scholarship applications.

As my positionality affects all aspects of the research process, methodology and in particular the fieldwork, I reflect on other aspects of my positionality and identity, such as race, throughout this chapter.

3.3.3 An embodied method

My body and my embodied skills proved crucial in researching foodways in Chitungwiza, an advantage of adopting a highly embedded research approach. After all, participant observation as a woman in a family in Zimbabwe inevitably requires more than just talking because of the established gender roles. The gender aspect of my positionality is relevant here. The fact that I could perform certain embodied tasks (taking care of a child, cooking, cleaning, washing) strengthened my bonds with the in-laws. I became a fully-fledged female family member, as the vignette attests to. The

everyday bodily practices, and the exhaustion that came with it, also made me understand better the considerations that people (particularly women) made, or were forced to make, in growing, purchasing, preparing and consuming food. By means of actually participating, I was able to realise what it means to live in a town where the average household deals with multiple forms of oppression on a daily basis. I could now feel that in a world of disorder that repeatedly serves unpredictable situations, mundane practices such as food consumption do not always involve logical or rational thought patterns. As such, I could for example slightly better grasp the admiration of 'glamorous' lifestyles and the seduction of fast-food chain Chicken Inn.

My body and the act of eating often inadvertently served as a research instrument (Crang 2003). Crang argues that the process of learning through our bodies' responses and situations provides insight into haptic knowledges. Longhurst, Johnston & Ho (2009, p. 334) further explain the meaning of this type of knowledge with the word visceral, which refers to 'the sensations, moods and ways of being that emerge from our sensory engagement with the material and discursive environment in which we live'. For example, cooking and eating can illuminate how tastes and aromas trigger and construct cultural memory and provide insights into individual and collective identities (Hayes-Conroy & Hayes Conroy 2008). In other words: everyday bodily food-related practices offer an entryway into an understanding of 'how we eat into culture, eat into identities, indeed eat into ourselves' (Probyn 2000, p. 2).

To understand the visceral realm – the bodily realm where feelings, moods and sensations are manifest – in the Slow Food movement, Hayes-Conroy (2010, p. 734) used 'sensory-based research events', which comprised of 'intentionally designed experiences' around this movement. She asked her participants to create an experience that, in their eyes, reflected the meaning of slow food. These experiences included eating meals in homes or restaurants, preparing food, gardening, food shopping and more. I, to the contrary, never planned such visceral experiences beforehand. Because I

was part of day-to-day family life, such 'sensory-based research events' occurred spontaneously.

3.3.4 Interviews in Chitungwiza

Besides informal conversations, or what Bernard called informal interviewing (Bernard 2006, p. 211), that occurred intuitively as part of the participant observation process with my family, I also conducted twenty-eight semi-structured qualitative interviews in Chitungwiza. Qualitative (mobile) interviews are a suitable method for my research because they elicit detailed, rich, and in-depth narratives and descriptions that can grasp the complexity of people's ideas and practices surrounding food. As I wanted to have free-flowing conversations based on key topics, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews. They are 'conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion' (Rubin & Rubin 2005, p. 5). Arksey and Knight (1999, p. 39) compare the qualitative interviewer with a jazz musician in a jam session: 'The key may have been set, and there is an initial theme: thereafter it is improvisation'. I viewed the interview as a dynamic, interactional and interpretative activity in which I recognised that the participant is 'neither a repository of opinions and reason, nor essentially a wellspring of emotions' (Holstein & Gubrium 1995, p. 17). By asking follow-up questions and continuously communicating about my own and the participants' processes of 'meaning-making', I aimed to achieve a fair and balanced representation of the participants and the issues at stake (Denscombe 2002).

During the interviews, I asked questions that were often guided by key topics and questions as outlined in my interview topic guide (see Appendix B). To start the conversation and create rapport my first question was always: 'What is your favourite food?'. Other recurring questions in the interviews revolved around daily foodways (What do you eat on a day-to-day/ weekly basis? How do you decide what to eat?), food sourcing ('Can you describe a shopping trip?'), the various meanings of food in daily life ('what makes food 'good',

urban, rural, traditional, Zimbabwean? and gender roles ('Who does the cooking/shopping/growing food in your household?').

Interviews are valuable because they complement participant observation in several ways. In this sense, Agar (2008) stresses the importance of the mutual relationship between (informal) interviews about what people say, and observation of what they do. This dialectical relationship is imperative because participants might only give a partial account of their behaviour and values during the interviews. This could have several reasons: the participant can be misinformed, has had limited experiences, omits aspects that are obvious to him or her but not to the researcher, says things he or she thinks the researcher wants to hear (Agar 2008, p. 159), wants to keep certain things secret or feels uncomfortable by the semi-natural setting in which the interview takes place (Blaikie 2000, p. 28). Participant observation, then, complements insights from the informal interviews and enriches my ability to create descriptions and explanations that are as close to people's reality as possible. Vice versa, interviews can balance interpretations from observations, as they give the researcher the chance to ask participants for clarifications about certain observations.

Most of the interviews that I conducted in Chitungwiza could be classified as 'mobile interviews' (Ross et al. 2009) or 'go-along' interviews (Kusenbach 2003; Wiederhold 2014). This involved requesting family members, neighbours, family friends and other acquaintances to guide and show me around their neighbourhood or asking them if I could help with an activity they were busy with or planning to do, such as preparing tea or dinner, plucking tomatoes from the garden or buying something at the corner shop. Making a small journey or undertaking an activity with the participants was a way to create rapport and build trust, because they were in charge of the activity.

Undertaking activities while holding a conversation made the research setting more relaxed than the conventional sit-down interviews that were initially part

of my research design. In their research about experiences of migrant women in New Zealand, Longhurst, Johnston and Ho (2009, p. 336) similarly remark that when participants started cooking, 'they appeared to relax and seemed more in control of the research encounter'. I conducted a few conventional sit-down interviews at home with family friends or neighbours in Chitungwiza, but I noticed that participants felt they needed to provide me with the correct answers – as if I were a schoolteacher. Despite my efforts to create a safe and enabling environment and hold an engaging conversation, I realised my positionality and white 'outsiderness' in a 'question and answer setting' created distance and the adoption of certain deep-seated roles. Due to histories of colonialism, development and globalisation, most participants have been the ones being instructed when they were in contact with someone with my characteristics: white, European, highly educated, middle class and associated with a European country. Yet, when I shared an activity, such as cooking or a journey through the neighbourhood with participants, boundaries between these roles began to blur more easily. Participants were now the ones educating me, often about a topic they were proud of: be it their cuisine, fruit and vegetable markets or their neighbourhood.

Besides these mobile interviews with people who were part of Tapiwa or my family's network Tapiwa, I also conducted interviews with participants that we met on the street in Chitungwiza. These participants ranged from food vendors working on the street to gas station attendants to youth at their hangout spot or to anyone who found my presence as a *murungu* (white person) in Chitungwiza interesting (see Appendix A for a list of participants). My research assistant, Tapiwa, a close and exceptionally street-wise family friend living in Harare, joined me to help me find my way around, due to safety concerns or language purposes (see below). A strong-looking man with an incredibly friendly and outgoing demeanour, Tapiwa often approached research participants first and then introduced who I was and what my research was about. He was able to create rapport easily and to set a relaxed tone at the start of the interview by cracking jokes, holding small talk or

teasingly encouraging me to demonstrate my (humble) knowledge of Shona. Agreeing with Bujra (2006) that interviews should be held in the language the participant is most comfortable with in longer conversations, Tapiwa also offered the participant to be a translator at the beginning of each interview he attended. Nearly all participants declined and preferred to talk in English, but Tapiwa appropriately intervened with his language skills when he noticed the conversation got lost in translation. I elaborate on the drawbacks of not conducting research in Shona in this chapter's section on limitations.

3.3.5 Talking about food: commonalities and inequalities

Food provided an easy way to start a conversation and create rapport during the interviews. It brought to the surface commonalities, as I evidently also buy, cook and consume food. I often started the interviews with the icebreaker question: 'What is your favourite food?'. Most of the participants immediately had an answer to it. I then followed up with questions about how to grow or where to buy the particular ingredients for the dish they mentioned. For the remainder of the interview, I tried to let the conversation flow according to the participant's thoughts, while gently guiding our communication according to key topics.

Figure 3.2 taking a break with Tapiwa in between interviews (used with permission). Source: photo taken by Tendai

Letting the conversation flow did not always proceed effortlessly, as my white skin colour in the postcolonial context had a bearing on the interviews, in some more than others. Similar to my earlier described experience with sit-down interviews and the effect of my positionality, the fact that I was a highly educated white outsider who was asking questions occasionally created an impression that I was an authority to be agreed with also during mobile interviews and interviews on the street. This at times resulted in the participants giving very brief answers and many questions from my side. When this happened, Tapiwa intervened by explaining to the participant that there are no right or wrong answers and that I was interested in the participant's personal experiences and thoughts. Sometimes this worked. Sometimes it did not, and I had to accept that I was a 'researcher-not-at-home' (Wiederhold 2015) and too much of a stranger to the participant.

While food was mostly a fun and bonding topic to talk about, it also laid bare privileges, power imbalances and inequalities, which comes back to my positionality as a researcher. For example, I did not have to worry about eating a balanced diet during my time in Zimbabwe, while I knew that some participants could be struggling with this. It therefore felt unethical to ask some families about how much and which food they ate per day or week. I wanted to leave them in dignity. The focus of the conversation was therefore on what makes good food and ideas and practices around food. If they wanted to talk about their food security status, they had the option to do so on their own terms instead of answering to an intrusive question from me.

One of several occasions, when inequalities in food consumption materialised, was after hanging out with a group of workers and truck drivers at a cement factory in Chitungwiza. Tapiwa told me that some men had mentioned to him that they were hungry and asked him if we could help out with lunch (fieldnotes, 3 February 2017). While I always carried a selection of fresh fruits or traditional Zimbabwean dried fruits to give participants after the

interview, this time we drove to the supermarket and bought lunch for them. While it can be argued that giving something to research participants will make them participate for the wrong reasons, hindering genuine interactions, I felt it was appropriate to give something after the interview, albeit very small, in return for people's effort and time.

3.3.6 Interviews in Johannesburg

The main data collection method during my fieldwork in Johannesburg consisted of semi-structured interviews. The interviews revolved around the same questions in the topic guide that I used for the interviews in Chitungwiza (see Appendix B). I was not able to participate in the daily rhythm of my participants' lives to the same extent as I did in Zimbabwe. Even though I was not able to carry out mobile interviews or participant observation due to safety and practical reasons and having only a few established contacts in Johannesburg, I conducted twenty-four interviews, involving thirty-five people because there were often bystanders. In addition, I held a group interview with six people. Via snowball sampling we talked to taxi drivers, receptionists, gardeners, maids, security guards, waiters, vendors, till operators and parking lot attendants (see Appendix A for a list of participants). This is reflective of the fact that the majority of Zimbabweans in South Africa work in the domestic service industries (Kiwanuka 2009). Most of them were working in the middle to upper-class neighbourhood of Sunninghill, but I also conducted interviews with Zimbabweans working in the service industry in the working-class neighbourhood of Brixton and in the gentrified middle-class neighbourhood of Melville.

Interestingly, despite my repeated attempts to talk to more women, only one-third of all the participants I talked to were women. This number could reflect the fact that male migration is more dominant between Zimbabwe and South Africa (Crush & Tawodzera 2016). Furthermore, as women generally perform more emotional and physical labour in the household than men, they are likely to have less time to hold a conversation with me after their work. Another

possibility is that, considering conjugal gender relations and women's expected behaviour in public, women were reluctant to participate in seemingly formal interviews. Especially male family members may, for example, condone extended conversations with a stranger.

Together with my husband, Farai, and Tapiwa, I lived in an apartment in the upmarket Sunninghill suburb. As my research assistant and I approached Zimbabweans to participate in my research and organise mobile interviews (shopping and cooking together), it soon became clear that the most appropriate method of data collection was non-participative, semi-structured qualitative interviews. Due to the long working hours and commuting times, it was often not feasible to arrange home or shopping visits. Furthermore, due to safety concerns, which often the participants raised themselves, I was not able to accompany them to their homes in their neighbourhoods. Another possible reason they were apprehensive to let me join some of their daily food-related activities was understandably related to me being an outsider: why would they spend their precious little free time with an unfamiliar white lady and her friend? Due to the participants' tight and demanding working and commuting schedules, I interviewed the majority of participants during their breaks or right after their work in the service industry. Except for three interviews that took place in people's homes, one of which I describe in the vignette below, interviews took place at or around people's workplaces.

The following vignette shows a snapshot of the context and nature of interviews in Johannesburg. It shows how Tapiwa and I found ways to meet and interview Zimbabweans in an environment where I did not have a pre-existing connection with a family.

> **Vignette: talking to Barnabos in Johannesburg**
> After spending two weeks in Johannesburg in April 2017, I wrote the following in my fieldnotes:
>
> Tapiwa heard that there were many Zimbabweans working at the supermarket around the corner of our apartment. So we went there to

make new contacts for possible interviews. It was difficult to approach the ladies at the till, so I asked an employee if they sold Mazoe, a particular cordial from Zimbabwe. He guided us to the right aisle and while pointing at the two-litre bottles, he said proudly: 'This is real Mazoe from Zimbabwe. It's the one with a high concentrate of orange, not the one made in South Africa. That one has too much sugar'. This provided an easy entrance for Tapiwa. Before I knew it, he asked: 'Are you from Zim?'. Five minutes later, the Mazoe expert who was the butcher in the supermarket and whose name was Barnabos, invited us to come by his apartment in the same neighbourhood the next day after working hours. He even said he knew some ladies whom we could interview after we had mentioned that we had mainly talked to men so far.

The next day we went to Barnabos's apartment that he shared with others working at the supermarket. I brought him some juice and fruits as a small gesture to thank him for his time. After getting a tour of his vegetable patch in between the flat buildings, we sat down in the living room on the couch with plastic covers. We talked for three hours with the almost retired butcher, sometimes about food, but more often about his life. It seemed he was lonely and happy to share his life's story. The ladies he thought I could interview were not at home. When we returned a few days later, the Zimbabwean ladies he had asked – the maid of the neighbours, her accountant boss and the girlfriend of a housemaid – all briefly showed their faces but turned out to be too busy to talk to us. Tapiwa said: 'They are shy. And some just don't care. Most of the Shona ladies are not friendly anyway. Ndebele are friendly'.

A younger male housemate called Wellington working at the supermarket's bakery was curious and joined us in the living room. Having heard Barnabos's story, I tried to talk to the younger man. Alas, Barnabos was so enthusiastic that he took over the conversation. As respect for elders is important in the Shona/Zimbabwean culture, none of us dared to interrupt him. After one more hour of hearing Barnabos talk about the lives of his children, we said we had to leave as it was getting dark. While he escorted us to the road, he asked Tapiwa when he would return. Please bring me some mopane worms, *mufushwa* (dried green vegetables), millet, ginger and garlic. 'I miss home,' he said. He also asked me if I could bring him some shoes from Europe for his wife who needed them for her work as a nurse. He just wanted good quality, like the Birkenstock brand I was wearing. He would pay for them – no problem. I was taken off guard and avoided answering and said something like we can see what we can do, and gave him Abbos's number (fieldnotes, 15 April 2017).

This research encounter shows how difficult it is to create rapport and gain people's trust in an environment the researcher is not socially embedded in. It

brings to the fore that the reciprocity between my research participants and I was different in Johannesburg than in Zimbabwe with my family-in-law because in Johannesburg I maintained clear boundaries and exchanges that were more transactional than emotional. Ultimately, the interactions with Barnabos illustrate that my relationships with participants were transient and lacked the same continuous deep emotional engagement I had in Zimbabwe. These aspects transpired to my level of understanding of their food practices in daily life. While I gained rich insights about participants' thoughts, feelings and imaginaries about food through interviews like the one with Barnabos, I could to a lesser extent grasp the setting of their daily lives and its pleasurable and challenging intricacies than in Zimbabwe.

3.3.7 Informed consent and documenting the fieldwork

The data I collected during participant observation consists of fieldwork notes. During the day, I consistently and meticulously wrote about what I saw, heard and felt on my mobile phone or notebook. Often these notes that I made on-the-go consisted of key words. This was least disturbing and most convenient considering the mobile and active nature of my research activities. Because I was often at home or I returned home several times during the day, I mostly rewrote these digital scribbles into more extensive notes in my room, where I could best concentrate. My family consented to me observing their foodways for the purpose of my research. I told others I engaged with during participant observation that the reason for my stay was to do research about food and that this involved observing and participating in daily life in Chitungwiza. Often a conversation then ensued about what this entailed. I also showed them my notebook so that they had a better idea of what I was exactly doing. During the mobile interviews and interviews on the street both in Zimbabwe and South Africa, I used audio recordings on my phone to capture the emotional and language-related nuances of conversations. Recording the interviews has also allowed me to focus more on the conversations, as I did not have to take notes.

During the first few interviews in Chitungwiza, to gain informed consent for the recordings and participation in general, I introduced and explained written informed consent forms and information sheets I had prepared beforehand. Yet, the participants were reluctant and suspicious to sign these documents, which to them looked official. To take a case in point, one man said to Tapiwa with a surprised look on his face when he was handed over the forms: 'Chii ichi!', meaning 'What is this!'. I realised that signing documents is met with suspicion in Zimbabwe, considering that country is 'fraught by a certain culture of fear' (Koch 2013) due to its authoritarian and repressive government. I realised it clearly made participants uncomfortable out of fear for reprimands from the community or the Zimbabwean security apparatus (for example, recordings being used against participants at a later point) (see also Gentile 2013), which has its 'CIOs' (employees of the Central Intelligence Organisation) positioned throughout society and which sees foreign journalists and other Western individuals as enemies.

Based on these experiences, I decided that a recorded verbal statement was the most appropriate way to establish informed consent. After establishing contact, Tapiwa and I explained the topic of my research, asked if we could audio record the conversation with my mobile phone and informed participants that they would be anonymous, what the data would be used for and who had access to it. If he or she agreed, we then recorded the participant saying so. With the exception of two participants, all participants agreed to record the interview, I think partly because my topic was not overtly political. I always made sure to be very discrete when recording an interview so that outsiders would not notice it and perhaps suspect we would be engaged in 'political activities'. After turning on the recording function on my phone, I placed the phone in a small bag on my chest. In Johannesburg, we also recorded informed consent instead of written informed consent forms because it was possible that some participants did not have the right papers to stay in South Africa and were therefore afraid of signing any forms.

3.4 Analysis

I have reached my conclusions according to inductive reasoning, as I have drawn inferences from empirical observations with the goal of contributing to existing theory and knowledge. The vignettes and writings based on my fieldnotes, especially in chapters 5, 6 and 7, reflect the inductive nature of analysis as they clarify how I have built arguments and connections to theory on the basis of observing, participating in and talking about foodways. As the analysis of empirical material is a constant process, throughout my fieldwork I have continuously analysed the information that I documented on paper and on audio recording. It gave me insight into when I had reached theoretical saturation, that is, the point when participants' stories began to have the same ring to them and when I felt I had heard the range of diverse stories that characterised ideas and practices around good food (Crang & Cook 2007).

After coming back from fieldwork, I copied my fieldwork notes to a digital format and transcribed all interviews. I then analysed the notes and interviews by means of a thematic analysis, which involved systematically organising the data by creating recurring core and sub-themes (Bryman 2012, p. 578-581; Jackson 2001). After entering all material in NVivo, I discovered emerging patterns and connections in the data. As is evident in the coding overview in Appendix C, different themes evolved. I could not include all themes in this thesis, so I have chosen to focus on the themes that most define and characterise experiences of thinking about and providing 'good' food in Chitungwiza. Throughout the process of thematically analysing the data, I have remained attentive to its effects on the interpretation of the data and thus on representations of reality. I also acknowledge my own presence in the construction of knowledge, as I was the one deciding on which themes were included in the thesis and on what basis. By remaining close to the original data and not shying away from contradictory findings, I hope I have avoided the process of abstracting a heterogeneous and 'messy' social world into definite and coherent representations of reality (Law 2006).

3.5 Limitations and dilemmas

I encountered a number of challenges during my fieldwork that warrant discussion. A major challenge related to my position as an outsider. Even though I was an insider, because I was part of a Zimbabwean family in Chitungwiza, I was also an outsider as a white person from Europe. Despite me taking Shona classes via Skype and making efforts to learn about Zimbabwean culture, my limited Shona language skills and imperfect cultural competence meant that I did not always grasp the intricacies of participants' language, social and cultural references, subtle meanings and mannerisms. Moreover, due to Mugabe's authoritarian and repressive policies and the positioning of the security apparatus throughout society, as a white person talking to people in public, I did not feel entirely free to document and participate in public activities and neither to talk to as many people in public as I would have wanted. I was not used to functioning in an environment where certain actions could be deemed suspicious. I had to develop skills to gauge what was acceptable and what not. I, for example, tried to make pictures and notes of a marketing show of a certain brand of bread in front of a supermarket, but I was quickly and harshly reprimanded by my brother-in-law. This can be seen as a disadvantage of trying to the highly embedded research approach that I took in Chitungwiza.

Another challenging factor relating to being an outsider in my fieldwork setting relates to my positionality and the emotional side of doing fieldwork. Not coming from a socio-economic background similar to my research participants meant that I was often in many ways confronted with my privilege. This was an emotional process that I dealt with during and after my fieldwork. Issues such as our direct neighbour's ten-year-old daughter passing away from 'a swollen leg' and not being able to get the right medical attention, or the street vendor who always looked out for me committing suicide because he was robbed of all his savings took an emotional toll on me. I was very cognisant that it is not a coincidence that I encountered these issues during my fieldwork and that they are representative of what the inhabitants of Chitungwiza deal

with in their lives. The intensity of this impacted my research in the sense that I perhaps unconsciously not have engaged as in-depth as necessary with certain hardships that I saw people encountered as, even though I did not completely evade this type of findings, as I, for example, describe the difficult issues Tapiwa faces in Chapter 6.

Ironically enough, another challenge I encountered relates to my position as an insider. Inevitably I became entangled in family politics and there were certain expectations I was not aware of. This impacted my research, because I was not able to visit and observe foodways in the family's *kumusha*. I elaborate more on dilemmas regarding my ability to research the rural-urban interface in the conclusion. In the conclusion I also reflect on dilemmas regarding studying scale, that is, interviewing actors operating on various scales in the realms of food and agriculture in Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, while this is perhaps part and parcel of living with your family-in-law, navigating these matters sometimes took my attention and energy away from focusing my thoughts and conversations on foodways.

Another limitation is that, because Chitungwiza is in Mashonaland and my family identify as Shona, I assumed my participants in Chitungwiza identified as Shona and did not ask about their ethnic group membership. For this reason, I could have overlooked certain differing foodways of participants who identified as Ndebele or in other ways (for example, having forefathers from Malawi). Other limitations – not having conducted interviews with different actors working in the field of food security at different scales and the shift of fieldwork to Johannesburg – are discussed in the conclusion chapter.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the methodology that I have used to research Zimbabwean urbanites' foodways and conceptions of good food. I have shown that ethnographic participant observation in a household involves an

intensive experience that is characterised by close personal and emotional relationships. I have explained that through 'hanging out' in the household, being involved in the day-to-day rhythms of the household and being a part of the inadvertent moments of the mundane, I have studied the various and contradictory meanings surrounding daily foodways of urban Zimbabweans. I have also explained how my white 'outsiderness' in Chitungwiza has not only shaped the research process, but also gave me insights on the intersections of race, gender and foodways. I, moreover, have explained the practical reasons for shifting a part of my interviews to Johannesburg and have outlined my research experience of, and implications of being in, this less familiar context.

I have, furthermore, outlined how participant observation and interviews have complemented each other. The method of participant observation gave me an in-depth insight into what people do and say, whereas interviews focused on what people said. Through interviews, I was able to consider a wide variety of perspectives due to the possibility to talk to a range of different participants. Through participant observation I was able to contextualise the production of the good food narrative (see next chapter) in the sense that I could recognise how meanings of good food were often more contradictory than the way they were presented in interviews (see Chapter 6). After studying colonial and postcolonial agrarian and urban political economy in the following chapter, the subsequent three empirical chapters (chapters 5, 6 and 7) directly engage with the findings that my methodology has produced.

Chapter 4: Agrarian change and urban daily life in Southern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the political economy of food and agriculture and urban daily lives in colonial and postcolonial Zimbabwe. This chapter serves as a basis for the empirical chapters, where I examine how historical economic and political processes on different scales stand in relation to contemporary meanings and practices of good food.

The chapter starts by describing how a racial spatial and environmental ordering was created during colonialism. Central to the establishment of colonial hegemony with a racially separated economy and society that served the economic and political interests of the settler community and the British Empire was the division of the country's space and socio-environmental systems along racial lines. This meant that the colonial administration developed a centralised and simultaneously dual agricultural system. Export-oriented farming on high potential land was reserved for the white settlers, while black Zimbabweans were forced to practice subsistence farming on confined unproductive land and later smallholder capitalist peasant agriculture that benefitted industrial interests of the white settlers. In the empirical chapters, I connect this racial ordering of space and socio-ecological systems to contemporary meanings, imaginaries and practices of good food. I describe how the colonial management of the city, of which the guiding principle was segregation, served as a basis for a hierarchy of tastes. I also describe how the organisation of the black labour force, resulting urban–rural connections and colonial domestication projects shaped urban diets. In Chapter 6 and 7, I look at how these influences on urban diets during colonialism are present in urbanites' relationships with food and meanings and practices of good food.

In the second half of this chapter, which looks at the post-independence history of Zimbabwe, I demonstrate how the political economy of agriculture is

formed by tensions between the ruling party's main drivers: to redress colonial inequalities while maintaining political and economic power. The way the ruling ZANU–PF (Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front) party dealt with the dual agricultural system inherited from colonialism is premised on these two drivers. Particularly after the millennium, it becomes increasingly clear that holding on to power was the ruling party's main interest, as militarised authoritarianism and economies of patronage lead to a dilapidated national food system, a broken public infrastructure and dire urban living circumstances. In Chapter 6, I show how this postcolonial political economy shapes participants' binary valorisations of good food, which besides values related to local 'indigenous' foodways also involves values that are based on ideas of progress, development, modernity and social hierarchies.

4.2 The emergence of a dual agricultural system

In 1889, the British government authorised John Cecil Rhodes to create the British South Africa Company (BSAC), a commercial–political entity with a mandate to exploit economic resources (that is, mining diamonds and gold) and act in the interests of British capital. After a decade of appropriation, lawlessness and violence on behalf of the BSAC state and several Shona and Ndebele uprisings, the British imperial government granted the colony an official governing and law-making body: the Southern Rhodesia Legislative Council (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). While the governmental body changed during the course of colonisation, this heralded the start of many decades of the institutionalisation of the racial separation of the economy, the government and law. Most, if not all, laws consolidated the interests of the European settlers and served to control the lives of Shona and Ndebele people to their advantage (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). Explaining his colonial policy, Rhodes urged settlers to treat Africans as a 'subject race', depriving them of any form of agency. He said that Europeans must be 'lords over Africans' and make sure that they 'continue in a state of barbarism and communal tenure' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009, p. 83). This process was filled with constant negotiation and contestation between four groups: the sovereign imperial

metropolis, the local administration overseeing authority and order, the indigenous black African population (hereafter referred to as Africans) that persistently made its presence known and a tight-knit, entitled, settler community (Elkins & Pedersen 2005).

Mining and agriculture were central to pursuing capitalist enterprise, one of the main motives of colonisation. Throughout the years of colonisation, by means of a series of land ordinances, settlers confiscated prime agricultural land and Africans were forcibly moved to low-potential areas, called 'native reserves' and renamed 'communal areas' following independence. In 1930 this system of racial segregation and division of land was formalised with the Land Apportionment Act. The country's ninety-six million acres were divided as follows: forty-nine million acres were categorised under European Areas and twenty-nine million acres under native reserves. The remainder was designated as native purchase areas, where an African rural petit bourgeoisie could own land, game reserves or forestry, or simply unassigned (Machingaidze 1991). Where land in European areas was administered as private property with title deeds, land in native reserves was owned under communal tenure without title deeds. Africans were allowed to use the demarcated, and often unproductive, land for constructing homesteads, cultivation and grazing cattle (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

In this way, the settlers created a powerful institutional system in favour of European commercial agriculture as part of an export-led national economic strategy that served the consumption and investment interests of the settler minority and the empire. The white farming sector predominantly comprised of large-scale commercial specialised enterprises, focusing on tobacco, maize, horticulture and dairy. The sector was characterised by a high-input and technology-dependent farming system, with hybrid maize, artificial fertiliser and mechanisation as key aspects (Wolmer & Scoones 2000). The Rhodesian state consolidated the power of commercial farmers by means of creating the Commercial Farmers Union, a centralised authority that lobbied

for and financed the interests of European farming, supporting research to maximise productivity, investing in infrastructure, providing subsidies and creating a state-run marketing board that favourably oversaw the supply and distribution of agricultural produce (Eicher 1995; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

Agriculture in the reserves was regulated according to the fears of white farmers. The government made sure, through measures such as allocating poor quality land, that Africans in the reserves and African small-scale commercial farmers could not jeopardise the business of white commercial farmers. In this way, the government actively constructed a dual agrarian structure comprising of large-scale settler farms and subsistence peasant farms. This structure 'was tied to industrial interests wholly-owned by the white minority and foreign capital' (Moyo and Chambati 2013, p. 4).

Through expropriating land and dispossessing Africans, the colonial state created fragmented peasant-worker households. Dispossessed of their property – mainly land and cattle – African Zimbabweans were forced to sell their only remaining source of making a living, their labour. While women remained in the reserves, men worked under exploitative circumstances in mines, the increasingly competitive agricultural industry and other industrial workplaces (Moyo & Chambati 2013). Petty-commodity production and other forms of unwaged female labour in the reserves subsidised male labour for the colonial capitalist venture. This created fragmented peasant-worker households. According to Yeros (2002), these broken households formed a semi-proletariat, since neither a solid industrial proletariat, nor a viable peasantry was established.

Crucial to the creation of the dual agrarian structure were coercive interventions in smallholder black farming in the reserves from the 1920s onwards. These were supposedly meant to civilise the primitive farming and backward social organisation of natives, but the underlying motive was agricultural intensification. American missionary Emory Alvord appointed as

‘Agriculturalist for the Instruction of the Natives’ in 1926 led the process of intensification, commoditisation of agriculture through cash crop cultivation, Christian conversion and denigration of traditional agricultural knowledge and ecological belief systems (Page & Page 1991). A mixed farming discourse based on managing linkages between crops and livestock within small-scale farming systems was introduced. It comprised of the application of modern and improved farming techniques in combination with Christian principles to inspire ‘civilised living’ (Andersson & Giller 2012; Leedy 2010). The ideal African farmer would successfully combine draft power, manure use, legume-based rotations, improved fallows, crop residue management for use as fodder and consolidated landholdings. The latter entails the division of land in separate arable and grazing blocks, creating separate grain and livestock ‘farm enterprises’ (Wolmer & Scoones 2000).

The intensification of smallholder farming in the reserves had two main advantages for the settlers. The supposedly improved efficiency and soil conservation on smaller plots of land would, firstly, hold off Africans’ demands for land and thus keep the unequal land division intact. Secondly, improved efficiency would free up labour for commercial farming, mining and the manufacturing industry (Wolmer & Scoones 2000).

Alvord’s principles, with the exception of separated land use, quantifiable rigid technical packages and Christian ideologies, resemble how African farmers integrated crops and livestock in a circular farming system before colonial occupation (Wolmer & Scoones 2000). Pre-colonial agriculture in Zimbabwe consisted of an elaborate and diverse system of cultivation that can be regarded as agroecological. Agroecology constitutes the application of ecological concepts and principles to the design and management of agricultural ecosystems (Altieri 2009). In the early nineteenth century, semi-nomadic clans of farmers and traders obtained their food from subsistence farming and gathering wild fruit, vegetables and meat. Besides agriculture,

their mode of production was based on a mixed economy of inter-tribal trading of cattle and salt as well as coastal trade in ivory, gold and iron (Beach 1977).

The agricultural system was based on the cultivation of a mix of main cereals, sorghum (*mapfunde*), finger millet (*zvio*) and bulrush millet (*mhunga*). Supplementary foods that were mostly used for relish or as a snack included pumpkins, watermelons, black-eyed peas, pigeon peas, maize, groundnuts and Bambara nuts. Brown rice and root vegetables like sweet potato, cassava and potatoes were also common. African farmers, moreover, cultivated bananas, pineapples and pawpaws as well as sesame seeds and chilli peppers. Every group of produce was cultivated on a particular type of soil, in a particular season and/or using an intricate system of (wo)man-made structures in the land and fallow periods. Men had control over the cropping fields and cattle, while women cultivated their own gardens besides working on the fields. Elaborate cultivation skills, grain storage technologies and preservation techniques aided the population in dealing with droughts (Page & Page 1991).

Maize was eaten as a complementary food or snack. Later in this chapter I explain how maize became a major carbohydrate source. Boiled grain or grain-based porridge formed the basis of daily meals. For women it was a daily, labour intensive and time-consuming task to prepare the millet porridge. It involved sifting, winnowing and pounding the grain to make the flour, which then had to then be ground and cooked (Richards 1939). Richards' description of the cooking process of the millet porridge shows many similarities with Amai's instructions on how to make *sadza* (see Chapter 7).

4.3 Agriculture, land and intensifying colonial state control

The white commercial farming sector was highly productive until the 1940s, when the large-scale uninterrupted mono-cropping system inevitably left soils exhausted or damaged by erosion in the 1940s (Kwashirai 2006; Phimister 1986). Another issue during the 1940s was that Southern Rhodesia lost its

previous self-sufficiency in food production, because farmers turned to cultivate the high-value cash crop of tobacco. By choosing the attraction of capital in the tobacco sector over low-value crops that would provide national food self-sufficiency, maize output and beef cattle production declined throughout the decade, forcing the government to ration mealie meal and resort to importing maize and other foodstuffs. Difficult trading conditions during the Second World War and the need to feed the empire during wartimes also contributed to the demise of national agricultural output and striving for self-sufficiency in food production (Rubert 1998).

In the late 1940s the government decided to aim for self-sufficiency, which marked a turning point in the type of agriculture Africans practised. Besides arranging labour forces from neighbouring Nyasaland and Mozambique (Phimister 1986) and using a new high-yielding hybrid maize variety that was designed for sandy soils and low-rainfall conditions (Eicher 1995), the government turned to black cultivators as a source of surplus food production, partly so that commercial farmers could continue creating revenue through tobacco cultivation (Machingaidze 1991). This was a shift in the government's attitude vis-à-vis agriculture in the reserves, because before World War II African agriculture had been confined to subsistence production. Besides the new objective to increase agricultural production in the reserves, other reasons to intensify control over agricultural production were to avoid environmental degradation in the reserves and create a stable workforce for urban manufacturing industries.

The instrument that legalised and accelerated state control over peasant production processes and landownership was the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) of 1951 (Machingaidze 1991). According to the colonial administration, the NLHA was made to conserve natural resources within the reserves and maintain and improve peasant subsistence agriculture to address overcrowding, soil erosion and declining yields (Government of Southern Rhodesia 1957). The Act and its messy implementation had many

far-reaching consequences that are too complex to detail here (see Alexander 2006), so I only focus on outlining its two main functions in relation to colonial control over Africans' socio-ecological systems and means of living in the reserves.

The need to address soil erosion was an inevitable outcome of the discriminatory land segregation system that had created crowded reserves with low-quality land. The NLHA imposed good farming and husbandry practices under threat of dispossession and changed the nature of landownership to improve the ecological disaster in the reserves. It allocated individual land rights in terms of 'economic units'. It thus replaced the customary communal system of land allocation with one of individual tenure. The rationale was that individually accountable persons would carry out land and water conservation. Individual landownership would, furthermore, bring peasant property relations in line with the dominant capitalist relations of production (Machingaidze 1991).

The NLHA also functioned to create a stable 'native' workforce, mostly due to the labour demands of the growing urban manufacturing industry. By creating the individually held economic units (land rights) that were intended to provide livelihoods for one monogamous family (subsistence production and the sale of surplus produce), a population of agriculturalists and wage labourers would be created. This would then put an end to temporary labour migration and the fragmented peasant-worker households that I described earlier. Such a division of labour would supposedly arrest the need for families in the reserves to seek complementary income in cities. It would also create a group of semi-skilled workers who remained full-time in cities together with their families. A landless population that did not receive an economic unit was supposed to generate income in the townships and business areas that were forcibly created in the reserves under the Act (Duggan 1980).

Yet, the envisioned separation of the countryside and the city, and thereby the creation of a stable labour force, was practically impossible. Poor urban living conditions, such as inadequate housing, insecure tenure, low wages, discriminatory legislation and absence of social security, meant that labourers did not cut ties with their rural base that provided then with security. It also made the relocation of families to urban areas impossible. Vice versa, unsustainable forms of agriculture in the reserves (continuous tillage on land that actually needed fallow periods) prevented agriculture from being a viable endeavour without additional financial support from family members in cities (Machingaidze 1991).

In the face of growing opposition, a change of government, difficulties in implementation and failure to reach intended goals, the NLHA was suspended in the beginning of 1960s (Bulman 1975 in Phimister 1993). There was growing African opposition to the enforced reorganisation of land use and tenure. Furthermore, the NLHA disrupted the rural-urban linkages that were of economic, social and cultural importance in Africans' lives. The NLHA was one of the factors that fuelled resistance of the African nationalist movement (Phimister 1993). The African National Congress and its successors organised opposition to the NLHA in various forms throughout the country. An example was 'freedom ploughing' in which peasants were encouraged to disregard instructions from agricultural demonstrators and to plough 'anywhere' so as to neglect land allocations (Machingaidze 1991). In the following years, the government adopted a less-interventionist position in regard to the reserves. The mixed farming model was still promoted throughout the 1960s and following years, but most state resources focused on the commercial farming sector (Wolmer & Scoones 2000).

4.4 The segregated colonial city

In order to understand the current relationships that urbanites have with food in Zimbabwe, it is imperative to know more about the urban colonial history. The colonial governance of the city through a racial spatial ordering has laid

the foundations of, as I also show in the empirical chapters, the urban experience, rural-urban connections and value judgments about food in contemporary Zimbabwean cities.

Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni (1999) describe colonial urban centres as a 'site of struggle' for the settler population, because they aimed to establish a white city while simultaneously using cheap black labour in the same urban space. To create 'black spaces' that could serve the white city and industries with labour and suppress political voices in white governmental spaces, the city had to be highly racially segregated (Potts 2011). Through a set of laws, the state organised Africans' mobility by restricting who entered the city and where individuals could move, live and recreate within the city (Scarnecchia 2008).

Originally established as a fort in 1890 by a group of military settlers to facilitate commodity extraction, Salisbury (which is now Harare and of which Chitungwiza is a satellite town) was rapidly growing as a commercial and administrative centre by the turn of the century. It provided 'the needs of an embryonic export-oriented capitalist economic enterprise' (Musemwa 2010, p. 175). The government aimed to produce a cheap and flexible African labour pool to serve the settlers' interests. Initially, the state set up a temporary labour system in which the stay of labourers in the city was transitory. Initially working as domestic servants and later working as labourers in industries, these urban migrants were temporarily allowed to live in the city based on the fluctuating demand of labour. African men left their families in the reserves to work in town for a few months and lived as squatters in huts on the fringes of the city (Tawodzera 2010). Long-distance migrants from Nyasaland, Portuguese East African and Northern Rhodesia stayed for periods of a year and initially made up the majority of the population of 'locations' or 'townships', designated African residential areas. After the 1920s this dynamic changed and more Shona and Ndebele started living in townships, even

though by the 1950s half of the population still consisted of ‘foreigners’ (Yoshikuni 2001).

As the layout of the city was premised on racial and spatial segregation, the townships were situated at a considerable distance from the city centre and the white suburban neighbourhoods. The first location was called Harare (now called Mbare*)* about three kilometres from the centre. The following locations that were established, such as Highfields in the 1930s that was fifteen kilometres away from the centre, intensified segregation, because the distance to the white oasis increased (Museumwa 2010). The state controlled the temporality of labourers by constructing compounds, or also called hostels, designed for the occupation of single men. In combination with substandard housing, water, health and sanitation services, this prevented families from settling in the city (Rakodi 1995).

After World War II, the combination of a growing manufacturing sector and the Native Land Husbandry Act brought about a more non-migratory stable workforce. This led to a more permanent urban presence of Africans. The population growth required the construction of more houses suitable for a nuclear family. In the 1950s and 1960s, seven different townships were built at least ten kilometres from the city. The houses were, as Kay & Cole (1977, p. 49) describe them, ‘small box-like dwellings, set within individual plots, with a consequent lack of sizeable open spaces for informal recreation, amenity and cultivation’. The houses were permanent structures as part of technocratically planned neighbourhoods. Extensive political support for orderly segregated urban environments stemmed from the desire to effectively control and police the urban environment. This resulted in a city where most building materials were permanent, and where low-income ‘self-built’ residential housing was restricted (Potts 2011).

As described in the introduction, Chitungwiza was developed in 1967 as a dormitory township twenty-three kilometres southwards of Harare. Even

further removed from the capital city than the other townships, it was meant to supply the most southern major industrial area of Salisbury. The official population was originally 172,000, but over the years it has become one of the fastest-growing cities in contemporary Zimbabwe, with almost half a million inhabitants (Musemwa 2010).

Segregation also had a social function, as it preserved a cultural and social hierarchy. Settlers considered the city as a white civilised space in which the tribal and primitive Africans were visitors who belonged in rural spaces (Seirlis 2004). The settler population lived in scenic suburban middle-class areas, actively purporting civilised living through, for example, gardens that showcased 'white cultured-ness' (Seirlis 2004). Besides settlers thinking that segregation prevented Africans' social presence, nuisance and the spread of diseases that their black bodies carried, this racial ordering in space translated to the social arena by creating and maintaining a hierarchy of tastes. In the empirical chapters, I consider how this hierarchy is present in contemporary valuations of food.

When Africans were still part of a temporary migratory urban workforce, many felt antipathy to cities and struggled to identify with urban spaces, not only because the Spartan-like existence and high levels of control, but also because urban spaces represented alienation from their identity and origins, which were (and still are) tied to their ancestral land. Some regarded cities as bastions of Europeans colonisers who undermined the integrity of African life (Yoshikuni 2001). Yet, when Africans had a more permanent presence, cities became for many a place for economic opportunities in the informal sector, new identities and creativity as expressed in music, dance or sports (Makombe 2013) and food culture, as the urban diets and food markets that I describe below attest to.

4.5 Urban diets during colonialism

It may be clear by now that the settlers' demand for urban labour influenced many aspects of Africans' lives in the city. I have demonstrated that their mobility and living circumstances were guided by the quest for cheap labour in white-owned industrial and residential spaces. As I show in this section, the economy of labour migration has also influenced Africans' diet. I also discuss the role of urban markets in urbanites' diets and how they facilitated urban–rural linkages and diverse culinary cultures.

In the years before World War II, when the African urban population consisted mainly of male labourers, the urban diet was bleaker than when families were allowed to reside in cities. In addition to meagre cash wages, labourers received food rations. Most local companies provided carbohydrates in the form of two pounds of maize meal a day. As the men living in hostels had little time to prepare their own meals, the main meal of the day consisted of *sadza* dipped in skimmed milk from cartons. Another meal option was a mug of malted millet beer (Central African Journal of Medicine 1961). If their wage allowed, labourers could supplement *sadza* with green vegetables bought from informal street traders or open markets.

An example of a more generous allowance given by a foreign-owned company is as follows (Mosley 1987, p. 210):

> 3.5oz salt per week
> 2lb maize meal
> 1lb meat per week
> 2lb vegetables per week
> plus a choice between 20oz of lard, 20oz of monkey-nuts, kaffir beer*
>
> *Monkey nuts are peanuts. Kaffir beer is beer made from malted millet that so-called kaffirs – a racial slur referring to a black person – drink.

This description illuminates that the reasons for the shift from indigenous grains such as millet towards maize as a staple food relate to the settlers' demand for cheap labour for their capitalist enterprises. In his study on the

history of maize in Africa, McCann (2005) argues that the change to maize as the primary diet choice took place in the compounds and hostels of mines, farms and other colonial industries. The settlers wanted to feed their labourers with the cheapest food possible, which was maize. The crop was one of the settlers' agricultural focus areas because it can be efficiently grown as a monoculture (with hybrid seeds and chemical inputs) and provides quick turnover (Eicher 1995). The settler state, furthermore, influenced Africans in the reserves to grow maize so as to create a surplus that would fuel labourers in the manufacturing and industrial sectors (Page & Page 1991). At the same time, the emigration of men from homesteads to cities and industries prompted women to change their farm management and cultivate the labour-saving maize. The women used their knowledge of how to make grain porridge and applied it to maize, creating the backbone of Zimbabweans meals, *sadza* (McCann 2005; 2010).

Workers' diets were a technical matter. A low-nutrient diet high in carbohydrate sufficed to supply energy and satisfy hunger, but was not conducive for the heavy physical labour workers had to carry out. The local medical community therefore urged employers to add protein and vitamins to the rations. However, due to the industries' quest for profit, this fell on deaf ears (Mosley 1987). Similar recommendations were made in an International Labour Review (1936) report reviewing workers' nutrition in Africa. The report recommended addressing food deficiencies that cause illnesses (for example, ulcers, scurvy and appendicitis) and slow recovery from injury in order to prevent 'wastage of labour'. This shows that workers' diet and nutrition were a technical matter that involved perfecting the labourers' body as a machine whose output had to be optimised in order to carry out tasks for the greater good of creating revenue.

The government formed the Southern Rhodesia's Nutrition Council in 1947 to advise the government on African workers' diets so as to improve their stamina. In addition to optimising African labourers' diets, the conception of

this advisory council had another underlying motivation: to control the type of food Africans received via their employers. The white minority feared that the culinary hierarchy, in which Western food was a marker of cultural supremacy, would be disturbed by the supposedly increasing consumption of Western foods (white bread, tinned food, dried fish and other processed foods) by Africans (Makombe 2013).

When more families were allowed in urban areas after World War II, food consumption for city dwellers changed. While hostels remained in existence, food was now mostly eaten in a family setting. The wife and female family members were now able to grow, source and prepare food for the entire family. The above-mentioned study of life at the Harare township (which is now Mbare) (The Central African Journal of Medicine 1961, p. 112) chronicles the average meal and food sourcing strategies of an African family:

> Although it can be bought in town, most of the inhabitants depend on maize supplies from the reserves. *Sadza* is normally eaten with meat or vegetable stew. Most of the vegetables are grown in the small gardens in front of the houses and the meat bought daily from the butchers in Harare. (…) Most of the groceries are bought locally in the market or even in one of the many grocery shops in Harare which are operated by Africans. (...) Cooking oil at 4s a bottle lasts a week and a half and is mixed liberally with pumpkin leaves, rape and cabbage, which are often used as an alternative for meat. Pepper is popular and curry is in great demand.

Thus, food sourcing strategies consisted of a combination of growing and/or obtaining food from the reserves, maintaining a kitchen garden, receiving mealie meal rations from employers and purchasing food in markets or other unregistered urban food outlets. Because of low wages and the necessity to buy food in the cash economy, the majority of the African population, men and women alike (Jeater 2000), earned extra income from a wide range of unregistered self-employment activities. These endeavours ranged from more illegal matters like prostitution, child labour, brewing and selling liquor, to selling surplus vegetables from gardening, selling newspapers, haircutting, teaching, photography and carpentry (Mosley 1987). Besides the substandard

infrastructure, the locations were also characterised by a vibrant and creative informal economy (Makombe 2013).

Well before the first official markets were established in locations in the 1950s, the marketing and supply of fresh produce in the city were carried out by mobile vendors and unlicensed hawkers. Mobile vendors merged into the urban landscape and other African traders sold their produce at transport hubs where buses departed to the rural areas. The inability to control such unregistered food marketing strategies gave the Salisbury City Council impetus to erect licensed markets in native residential areas (Makombe 2013). The first market, or *musika* in Shona, in the former Harare location, continues to exist and is now called Mbare Musika, one of the largest fresh produce markets and marketing hubs in Zimbabwe (Chafa & Marufu 2016). Markets were mostly situated next to a bus terminus, which facilitated rural migrants from a one-hundred-kilometre radius to bring in not only green produce, but also firewood, small livestock like poultry and goats, eggs, grains and traditional fruits such as *mazhanje* (wild loquats) or *mathowe* (snot apple/African chewing gum). Settler farmers would also deliver produce for resale.

The markets throughout the country were far from uniform. The products on offer reflected varieties in regional ecological as well as ethnic differences. For example, where in Shona speaking markets vendors sold tomatoes, onions and green leafy vegetables, in Ndebele dominated areas, mostly pumpkin, mushroom, pepper, groundnuts and okra were sold (Cheater 1979). In this sense, the urban markets reveal urban–rural connections as they reflected the diet and socio-ecological system in the reserves. The markets and informal sources of fresh produce were important for the locations' residents, as the diverse markets provided a way to connect to one's culinary heritage and culture. Vice versa, rural–urban linkages also surfaced in food consumption patterns in rural areas. In detailing the effects of visiting and returning migrants to rural reserves during colonialism, Makombe (2013) shows how

certain food items, such as Coca-Cola bottles, became associated with urbanity, earnings made in urban areas and cosmopolitan lifestyles. Other items, such as sugar, tea, bread and jam, were also perceived to be urban, as former reserve residents would bring supplies from town. I return to the classification of certain foods in terms of urban and rural spaces in the empirical chapters.

Another way settlers tried to influence the diet of urban Africans was by control over their domesticity. Apart from primary school elementary domestic science curricula for girls, the African Administration Department ran domestic service and home management classes, 'where trained personnel, both European and African, give demonstrations, lectures and undertake home and family visits' (The Central African Journal of Medicine 1961, p. 113). These initiatives were part of a broader home craft movement in which white women taught African women how to be good homemakers, wives and mothers. Amai, for example, followed cooking classes at her former women's club, as I describe in Chapter 7. These were part of a variety of institutional forms in which particular forms of civilised homemaking were promoted from the 1920s until independence (Kaler 1999). The motivations behind this can be found in a combination of philanthropic concern for African welfare, a quest to construct controllable colonial subjects through the reproduction of family life and gender ideologies and the creation of a market for consumer goods (Kaler 1999; Shaw 2008; Burke 1991).

4.6 Redistribution and unchanged structures at independence

After the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement in 1979, a new constitution and elections, Robert Mugabe became the first prime minister of an independent Zimbabwe in 1980. At independence, the ZANU–PF government with Robert Mugabe as its leader inherited a highly centralised, unequal and racially divided settler economy. It was a diversified economy with an effective state apparatus, well-developed industries and capitalist firms, mainly based on agriculture, mining and manufacturing. In the fifteen

years before, a complex and violent power struggle took place (Mtisi, Nyakudya & Barnes 2009a). Since the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, Rhodesia was not operating as a British territory, but as an independent sovereign state. The state's main motive during the UDI period was to ensure stability for the white population and keep intact the uneven society and economy.

The economic and political dynamics in the UDI period are important in understanding what kind of agricultural infrastructure was inherited at independence. The UDI triggered international sanctions, which meant that the government's export-oriented economy had to be reorganised. A centrally controlled capitalist economy with an import-substitution strategy at its core took shape. Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front government aimed to accomplish self-sufficiency in consumer goods (for white consumption demands) by investing in commercial farming and the manufacturing sector. Hence, the government made attempts to diversify the agricultural sector. This quest made farmers shift from tobacco and sugar to maize, cotton, wheat, soybeans, coffee, cotton and beef (Makina 2010; Taringana 2014). Besides establishing state-owned farm estates in the 1970s, Smith's government built on foundations that were laid at the beginning of the decade: large-scale estate farming structures, mostly owned by South African and British transnational corporations and Rhodesian agribusiness firms, as well as state-supported infrastructure (dams, rural electrification, irrigation) (Moyo & Chambati 2013).

At independence in 1980, the main challenge of the racially divided country was to address equity in land and economic resource ownership. Mugabe's government took initiative in making the economy more inclusive in several ways. It invested heavily in public services and infrastructure. It succeeded in improving the health and education sectors as well as rural water and sanitation facilities and worker's rights. It also adopted policies for the inclusion of more black Zimbabweans in the public service (Muzondidya

2009). The government, furthermore, carried out a rural development programme aimed at the overcrowded communal areas, which were the former native reserves. Gradual land resettlement, positive pricing policies and improved access to marketing services, credit and agricultural extension were part of addressing rural poverty and inequality in landownership. These measures translated into a short-lived agricultural success story, when communal farmers produced the highest quantities of maize and cotton in the country. Originally meant to support a small minority of white farmers, the extensive subsidies to a large number of black farmers created budget deficits that constrained further agricultural growth (Mumbengegwi 2002).

Brett (2005) describes the macroeconomic policies in the period between 1980 and 1990 as a corporatist policy regime with redistributive elements. Corporatism is characterised by interventionism, protectionism and high levels of political authoritarianism. This regime of macroeconomic controls was based on the foundations that were laid in Rhodesia, particularly during the UDI years, when an effective state apparatus intervened extensively in the economy to achieve self-sufficiency. For example, post-independence agricultural policy had its roots in the colonial highly controlled agricultural pricing and marketing policy framework (Makina 2010). In practice, this meant that the government classified commodities as 'uncontrolled' and controlled'. Controlled products – grain, cotton, dairy, beef and livestock products – were marketed through their respective marketing boards with set producer prices. Consumer prices were also fixed at low levels so that they were affordable for urban consumers and the agro-industrial manufacturing companies as raw materials. The hefty parastatal subsidies to marketing boards became one of the factors that led to agricultural policy reforms in the 1990s (Mumbengegwi 2002).

Another continuity into the independence period is that the economic structures that serviced the white capitalist elite predominantly remained unchanged. The industrial economy, with its three main pillars, mining,

agriculture and manufacturing, was in the hands of a white minority and its transnational business partners (Raftopoulos 2000). In terms of the agricultural sector, this implies that the country still had to deal with the inherited dualistic agricultural sector consisting of a white-owned large-scale commercial farming sector and a black smallholder sector in communal areas (Mlambo 2017).

The post-independence industrial policy was dependent on foreign and settler capitalist enterprise and based on a balance between import substitution and export production strategies. These elements can be recognised in the government's agricultural policy objectives. They were, and have been since independence, as following:

> to increase the rate of growth in aggregate output; to achieve diversification in output composition; to maintain food security and self-sufficiency; to raise farm incomes and employment; and to increase the sector's role as a source of raw materials and foreign exchange earner (Mumbengegwi 2002, p. 237–8).

Despite the government's intention to improve the quality of life for the African majority by investing in the public sector, the structural causes of inequality were to a large degree still present (Raftopoulos 2000). Changing the unequal postcolonial state structures through redistributive efforts was only partially successful. With the exception of the early post-independence years, unemployment as well as social differentiation grew steadily. Rural and urban elite groups benefited most from the inclusive policies that made the economy and state more accessible to black Zimbabweans. However, a black middle class aspiring to enter the private sector faced exclusion in the white-dominated space. In urban areas, declining wages, deteriorating transport and housing conditions characterised day-to-day life for many (Stoneman 1988).

Despite the aforementioned public spending on rural development, the majority of households in communal areas faced poverty and lacked access to productive land. Progress in the area of land reform was slow. Disregarding

'illegal' peasant land occupations throughout the countryside, the government had by 1990 resettled less than one-third of the targeted 162,000 families on three and a half hectares of land, of which only nineteen per cent could be classified as prime agricultural land (Muzondidya 2009). The reasons for the slow pace can be found in the government's motivations for land redistribution. The dominant discourses on land reform in the 1980s were based on agricultural productivity. In line with the above-mentioned post-independence industrial policy that emphasises capitalist enterprise, discourses tended to shun large-scale land redistribution, arguing it would disrupt productivity. The government's land reform was predominantly designed to address displacement, landlessness and overcrowding (Moyo & Chambati 2013).

An important factor in understanding this dynamic is the continued presence of the Lancaster House constitution in the 1980s. It expired in 1990. The constitution, signed as part of ending the liberation war, included compromises regarding white minority rights. By guaranteeing white representation in parliament and limiting land redistribution with the 'willing buyer, willing seller' principle, the constitution consolidated the interests of white capital. This meant that the government was forced to take into account the settler's interests and that land could only be redistributed if the seller was willing to do so (Palmer 1990). Evidently, these forms of white protection prevented radical change of the country's uneven economy and society and led to mounting social and economic problems in the 1990s. As the 1980s were a period of state control, prolongation of white interests and largely unchanged societal structures, the main structures of the dual agricultural system that were central to the functioning of the colonial capitalist system persisted.

4.7 Liberalisation and informalisation during the 1990s

The 1990s were a decade of reform and the privatisation, marketisation, internationalisation and informalisation of the economy. Pressured by the

World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Zimbabwe accepted a package of conditional loans to reduce fiscal imbalances and create economic growth. This package, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), comprised the deregulation of domestic markets and prices, investment promotion and trade liberalisation, privatisation and curtailing public sector expenditure (Mumbengegwi & Mabugu 2002). The country's budget deficit was to be reduced by cutting the size of the civil service, phasing out parastatal subsidies and introducing cost-recovery measures (charging of fees) for social services (Mlambo 1997).

Even though in 1984 Mugabe had commented that accepting aid with strings attached would turn Zimbabwe into a 'neo-colonialist state' (Mlambo 1997, p. xiii), the government eventually took the ESAP road due to a combination of reasons too extensive to detail here. The earlier discussed enduring economic problems in the second half of the 1980s and difficulties in administering the macroeconomic control system may have contributed. In the latter half of the 1990s, a second phase of reforms, the Zimbabwe Program for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) was implemented. It was aimed at continuing unresolved reforms of ESAP and was characterised by similar contents, effects and failures (Mumbengegwi & Mabugu 2002). For convenience, I will refer to the total period of economic reforms as ESAP.

The reform programme had detrimental effects on the lives of the average Zimbabwean, to such an extent that people mockingly referred to ESAP as the 'Eternal Suffering of the African People' (Mlambo 1997, p. xi). After the implementation of ESAP, the health and education sectors deteriorated (Chisvo & Munro 1994; Tevera 1995), the country faced an overall economic downturn, negative numbers in agricultural output and growing inflation (Sachikonye 1999). The effects of the ESAP were predominantly concentrated in the urban sector because this is where people had to cope with job losses, stagnant or lower salaries or the entire disappearance of formal wages due to retrenchment in the public and private sector (Grant 2007; Potts 2010; Tibaijuka 2005). In the manufacturing sector, for example, many companies

had to downsize or close (Makina 2010). To take Chitungwiza as a case in point, once employing 6,000 people, Cone Textiles had to shut its doors permanently (Carmody 1998).
The austerity measures led to an informalisation of the economy, as they gave rise to an expanded urban informal sector, as people were forced to seek other forms of income (Jones 2011). The participation of women in the informal sector increased and intensified, as families had to eke out a living after formal retrenchment (Mupedziswa & Gumbo 1998).

Mass retrenchment also had a ripple effect in rural areas, as the rural population had been depending on remittances from labour performed towns. The new levels of vulnerability and precariousness that the ESAP generated altered existing urban–rural linkages in another way. When urban livelihoods deteriorated, many low-income urbanites turned to rural means of production. The desire to gain access to land thus became more pronounced and the demand for land reform more urgent (Potts 2010).

The disappearing parastatal subsidies and absence of price controls also brought about higher prices of goods and services, including food (Potts 2010). The reasons behind high food prices can be found in the consequences of the ESAP for the agricultural sector. Most policy measures were instituted to stimulate production for tradable export commodities instead of national food self-sufficiency and food security. Market forces became the determining factor of agricultural product prices, as control mechanisms were phased out. The monopoly of agricultural marketing boards was discarded and private agents could now enter agricultural marketing activities. This was also the case for agricultural input markets (fertilisers, machinery, seeds, and so on). Subsidies for marketing boards were eliminated in a bid to commercialise and privatise them. ESAP also dictated that severe cuts were made in agricultural infrastructure and credit, research and extension services (Mumbengegwi 2002).

Several scholars have debated the reasons why ESAP failed to bring positive growth in Zimbabwe (see Brett 2005, Mlambo 1997, Mumbengegwi 2002). Factors that may have contributed to this include two consecutive extreme droughts, failed implementation of reforms, unfavourable global trade conditions and a too immature domestic economy to compete internationally and sustain reforms (Mlambo 1997). Another view is that the aid package was doomed to fail, because it was designed to create a form of neo-colonial dependency in which African markets were meant to be opened up for Western products and to provide a cheap source of raw commodities for Euro–American parties (Dembele 2004).

In conclusion, the period of liberalisation reforms through ESAP heralded a major negative economic turning point in which the groundwork was laid for high levels of urban poverty and informalisation of the economy. Even though the political economy of agriculture was subjected to commercialisation and privatisation, the power dynamics in the dual agricultural system remained largely intact.

4.8 Agrarian restructuring and Zimbabwe's crisis: 2000–2008

Towards the end of the 1990s, Zimbabwe entered a decade that is known as the 'Crisis in Zimbabwe'. The decade was characterised by economic decline and political disorder and drastically changed the nature of the agricultural system. At the turn of the century, it became clear that ZANU–PF faced emerging political opposition in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a political party formed in 1999 that had its roots in the (urban) labour movement and was led by Morgan Tsvangirai (Raftopoulos 2009). The presence of the opposition was clearly felt as they opposed ZANU–PF's proposal to change the constitution into one that, firstly, would allow the state to take ownership over white-owned land without compensation, and secondly, would grant more powers to the executive Presidency. After a period of struggles between ZANU–PF and MDC surrounding the constitutional reform process, in February 2000, the

government lost the referendum about whether to change the constitution (Matondi 2012).

Soon after, squatters who had occupied land before the millennium due to poverty, housing and land shortages invaded and occupied over 1,000 farms together with war veterans and their supporters. These invasions took place at this point in time because they estimated that, in the face of growing political opposition and a referendum defeat for ZANU–PF, the government would tolerate it. Indeed, the government joined the war veterans' farm occupations. It opportunistically used the momentum of the occupations to start the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) (Matondi 2012), which marked the beginning of agrarian restructuring.

While the overt goal of the FTLRP was to redistribute land to indigenous black Zimbabweans, the underlying rationale of the programme was to strengthen the ruling party's position and demobilise structures and support of the opposition, as MDC's language of democratisation threatened ZANU–PF's quest for more authoritarian power and their bid to win the elections (Raftopoulos 2009). Alexander (2006) similarly argues that the politics of land was part of a process of remaking the state and to increase authoritarian power in the 2000s.

During the FTLRP, land was compulsorily acquired from white farmers during often violent and disorderly farm invasions. The land-occupation movement forced white farmers and their workers off the land without compensation. This and other land was distributed according to two schemes. The A1 scheme was intended for the majority of the landless population, who were allocated small plots for household production, and the A2 scheme was meant to facilitate the participation of (aspiring) black indigenous farmers in the commercial sector. It involved the division of large-scale commercial farms into farms of medium size (Marongwe 2011a). By October 2002, two years after the launch of the programme, eleven million hectares, including high-

quality arable land, from approximately 4,000 white commercial farms had been reassigned to about 300,000 small farmers. Furthermore, 54,000 black medium and large-scale commercial farmers had received offers to landownership (Sachikonye 2003).

There has been considerable debate about the beneficiaries of the agrarian restructuring. In regard to the smaller A1 farms, several scholars agree that the majority of beneficiaries were 'ordinary' Zimbabweans and that re-peasantisation took place (Matondi 2011; Moyo & Yeros; Murisa 2010; Scoones et al. 2010). Mutopo demonstrates that these processes of re-peasantisation are gendered. Based on her ethnographic study in Mwenezi District in southern Zimbabwe, she demonstrates that the agrarian restructuring through the FTLRP has allowed women to access land (Mutopo 2011) and participate in land acquisition processes as well as investments in farming activities (Mutopo, Manjengwa, Chiweshe 2014). Mutopo demonstrates that land access for women is not formalised, but rather characterised by negotiation and bargaining with family, state and traditional actors' relations, all within a patriarchal setting (Mutopo 2011).

Within these processes of re-peasantisation, land allocations were also characterised by political patronage, with the process being biased towards ZANU–PF supporters (Zamchiya 2011). Even though the allocation process of larger commercial farms (A2) had clear beneficiary selection criteria (that is, access to capital and farming skills), political power struggles marred these guidelines. The ruling party and its affiliates co-opted the institutions responsible for the assigning of land. Consequently, many beneficiaries were war veterans and political and business elites affiliated with the ruling party. Moreover, the land reform process created conflicts over double farm allocations, property boundaries, illegal settlements and the displacement of smaller A1 farmers by larger A2 farmers (Marongwe 2011b). Furthermore, Rutherford (2012) argues that while the rural semi-proletariat has benefitted, the authoritarian and nationalist politics of the state have, at times violently, sidelined farmworkers and opposition supporters in the resettlement exercise.

The state justified their material and civic dispossession by viewing them as belonging to white farmers and national traitors (Rutherford 2008).

The outcomes of the FTLRP are complex: there are stories of success and failure. An important outcome of the FTLRP is that the agrarian structure of white-owned capital-intensive farm ownership has been broken and that the dual agricultural structure inherited from colonialism has become fractured. Based on their empirical ten-year study in the Masvingo province, Scoones et al. (2011), argue that 'accumulation from below' was taking place. While the authors also demonstrate economic differentiation and impoverishment on resettlement farms, they write that a 'green revolution (...) based on skill, effort and hard labour, and the benefits of new land' is occurring on former white cattle farms' (Scoones et al. 2010, p. 124). Yet, Scoones et al.'s study and other research that makes similar arguments (Moyo & Yeros 2005) have been critiqued as a form of agrarian populism. Cousins and Rutherford maintain that these studies overlook the underlying political motivations behind the land reform and the problematic context of authoritarian nationalism (Cousins 2006; Rutherford 2011).

The immediate outcomes of the FTLRP programme on the capacity and functioning of the agricultural sector are a much-debated matter. While there is consensus about the productivity of the A1 smallholder farms as several empirical studies have shown that productivity has grown slowly over the years (Moyo 2009; Matondi 2012; Scoones et al. 2010), the production levels on the 'new' medium to large-scale A2 farms declined significantly. The reasons for this performance range from white farmers sabotaging the programme, international isolation due to sanctions that the international community imposed as a reaction to the human rights abuses during land reform (Moyo & Yeros 2007b), unfavourable weather conditions (Moyo 2011), the broader unfavourable economic environment, weak support systems due to the rapid speed of the implementation of reform (Scoones et al. 2010; Matondi 2012), unstable property rights and a disabling national context of human rights abuses (Alexander 2006; Rutherford 2012).

What is clear is that the formerly centralised commercial sector was left fragmented and the strong links between agricultural production and manufacturing weakened, setting in motion a period of deindustrialisation (Mlambo 2017). Specialised production systems that previously characterised the commercial large-scale farms were almost entirely dismantled (Raftopoulos 2009). The short-term upshot was that the country faced severe shortages in maize production, forcing it to depend on foreign aid for protracted periods in the 2000s. Another short-term effect was that groundnut, cotton, wheat, soybean, sunflower and coffee production decreased between fifty per cent and ninety per cent during the 2000–2003 period (Richardson 2004). What is more, without solid supply of agricultural raw materials, the capacity of the manufacturing industry dwindled, especially considering sixty per cent of the manufacturing industry was directly tied to agricultural output (Richardson 2004).

Due to lack of space to discuss the full dynamics of the land reform here, I conclude that land reform has created different agrarian relations, landholding structures and complex rural social landscapes (Moyo & Nyoni 2013; Murisa 2010; Scoones et al. 2010). Smallholders, middle and large-scale (A1 & A2) farmers as well as a few hundred former large-scale white farmers making up the agricultural sector are all farmers of different classes and genders, and with divergent financial means and interests who all have to negotiate the new power dynamics.

In conceptualising agrarian social change in Zimbabwe from a longer historical perspective, Moyo (2011) stresses the need to go beyond immediate political motives and productivity outcomes of the FTLRP. He argues that the character of the structural reforms have been distributive, to a wide enough extent that it has triggered significant historical progressive changes and agrarian transformations. Murisa (2013), furthermore, demonstrates that, through FTLRP, a pluralistic democratic form of social organisation involving a multiplicity of power relations between actors (land

beneficiaries, local government, national state, customary institutions) has emerged. The new relations of sociability, Murisa (2013) contends, have the potential to create inclusive and participatory processes of local government, agrarian relations and vibrant communities.

Despite the relative uneven distribution of land among beneficiaries and the retention of foreign-owned agro-industrial estates, the reform has largely been in line with what agrarian reform entails, which is: "transforming the role of various agrarian classes in struggles for development and democratization, towards equitable land ownership and social relations of production, and developing the agricultural production forces to enhance food security, livelihoods and the accumulation of capital (Bernstein 2010, p. 494)". With this conceptualisation of agrarian reform in mind as well as analysing emerging relations of production and distribution, social differentitation of access to land, land tenure relations and forms of accumulation, Moyo and Chambati (2013) argue that, in the context of neoliberal regime of accumulation led by monopoly-finance capital in the Global South, which overturned many socio-economic advances of decolonisation, Zimbabwe is at the forefront of radical redistribution of wealth.

4.8.1 Urban living circumstances and food access

Already dealing with the general macro-economic meltdown in the 2000s, the impact of agrarian restructuring on urban residents was particularly severe. Very little food from the rural areas made it to cities. Besides their small garden plots, urbanites' dependency on the cash economy for their daily food intake in combination with a national dependency on food imports due to declined agricultural production meant that their food access was vulnerable to price shocks in the global food system (Tawodzera 2013). When the economy was at the height of its meltdown in 2008, a further steep decline in national food production and a hiatus in (formal) food imports contributed to a surge in food poverty in urban areas, with disastrous consequences for people's wellbeing (Tawodzera 2011).

The tumbling economic downturn and inflation reached its nadir in 2008, when at the end of that year hyperinflation was hovering at 89.7 sextillion per cent (Hanke & Kwok 2009) and the country's external debt stood at six billion US dollars (McGreal 2008). Even though the causes are a subject of debate, direct causes include the agrarian crisis, exorbitant war veterans' payouts and the involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo's war. Indirect causes arguably date back to colonial resource inequalities, a narrow productive basis and the lack of a diversified economy, economic mismanagement, nepotism and corruption, unbudgeted welfarist policies of the 1980s and the failing neoliberal policies of the 1990s (Bond 2007).

Factors that intensified the crisis in 2008 were that the years of authoritarian rule and public sector negligence culminated into heightened political violence around the 2008 elections (Bratton & Masunugure 2008), while a catastrophic cholera epidemic raged, mainly in cities (Chigudu 2017). Furthermore, a large-scale government campaign called Operation Murambatsvina – literally meaning 'throw out rubbish' – intensified the effects of the crisis by disrupting livelihoods in urban areas. Starting in 2005, the operation destroyed all, according to the government, 'illegal activities' in urban areas to make way for 'orderly urbanisation' (Tibaijuka 2005; Potts 2011). Unregistered houses, businesses, and other informal structures, including the informal food system (incl. food markets) that urbanites depended on to access most of their food, were bulldozed, arguably with the aim of dispersing an urban population that might have otherwise revolted against the government (Masakure 2006). As a consequence, besides acute disruption of residents' livelihoods, the physical food environment changed dramatically, which had a negative impact on food access (Tawodzera, Riley & Crush 2015).

Several food-governance structures and policies after FTLRP and the Programme itself have brought about changes to markets in urban areas. In his study on the impact of increased land access among low-income urban residents due to the FTLRP, Philani Moyo (2013) finds evidence that there is upcoming entrepreneurialism among the new farmers who produce surpluses

as they trade in urban food markets. Furthermore, in his case-study of the role of the state in urban food system dynamics in Epworth, a similar socio-economic neighbourhood as Chitungwiza, Tawodzera et al (2019), Tawodzera describes how economically motivated statutory instruments implemented by the national government as well as governance by municipalities impact the food system, of which formal and informal food markets form an important part. For example, Tawodzera outlines that the municipality strongly controls the licensing of formal food markets, which can be marred by corruption. Tawodzera also demonstrates that a 2016 bill that required import permits and the introduction of bond notes in 2017 disadvantaged formal market vendors, making their products economically inaccessible to the average urbanite. The informal food sector, dominated by various small and informal players and regulated by various modes of power are exercised by various informal actors, is thus key to the food access to urbanites.

Another factor that compounded the crisis was that, starting in 2006, the government conducted another violent crackdown on informal activities, this time in rural areas targeting artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). Operation Chikorokoza Chapera (No More Illegal Mining), which lasted until 2009, led to various forms of displacement, marginalisation and increased clandestine precarious mining strategies among ASMs (Spiegel 2014). Considering the earlier mentioned central importance of social and economic urban–rural connections in Zimbabwean urban households and the fact that two million people across Zimbabwe depend on ASGM for their livelihoods (Spiegel 2014), Operation Chikorokoza Chapera must have had adverse social and economic ramifications for urban households.

As also outlined in the introduction, the crisis years in the 2000s meant that ways of *kukiya-kiya* and the multiple forms of getting by in the informal economy became even more pronounced than in the decade before. As the Zimbabwe dollar lost its value, most people's savings and pensions evaporated. Furthermore, to maintain the value of their assets, those who

were able transferred many of their monetary possessions into foreign currency. As a consequence, goods and services were increasingly available only in foreign currency, leading to food and other daily amenities such as healthcare, electricity, water, housing and transport to become even more unaffordable and inaccessible (Mukwedeya 2012). In dealing with these circumstances, many Zimbabweans relied on remittances from family abroad. While Zimbabweans started moving out of their country since the Gukurahundi massacres in Matabeleland in the 1980s, a consequence of the grim living circumstances during the crisis was that the numbers of political and economic emigrants, particularly to South Africa, rose sharply (Chiumbu & Museumwa 2012; Crush & Tevera 2010).

In his study of urban household food security during the 2008 crisis, Tawodzera (2013) establishes that rural-urban linkages were central to finding ways to 'get by' for two main reasons. First, urban households received food and money from rural areas, including from their own rural production. Second, urban households decided to send a part of their family to live in the rural areas in order to reduce urban food and other household expenses. This confirms that, as I explained in the introduction, urban households are multi-spatial as they diversify their economic activities in different geographic and economic places to make a living (Mbiba 2017). The basis of urban households' multi-spatial nature was laid through racial environmental ordering during colonialism (the creation of reserves) and the colonial economy that was based on temporary labour migration. In Chapter 5, I outline how these connections are also social and cultural in nature.

4.9 Patronage economies and political continuity after the crisis

After the height of the economic and political crisis in 2008, a power-sharing agreement between the MDC and ZANU–PF was instituted. This happened after the 2008 election was marred by controversy, political violence, and repression. Mugabe won an election that did not have any international or domestic legitimacy, which triggered international mediation, which led to the five-year-long power-sharing agreement (Cheeseman & Tendi 2012). In this

period, the economy temporarily recovered and the fragile financial markets stabilised as the Zimbabwean dollar was abandoned and a multi-currency regime was adopted. While the US dollar was mostly used in daily life, the British pound and the South African rand and later other foreign currencies were also accepted as forms of payment (Noko 2011).

The period was characterised by a 'politics of continuity'. Dominant political dynamics remained unchanged and Mugabe retained much of his power. Cheeseman & Tendi (2012) argue that power-sharing did little to intervene in the continuing militarisation of the state and repression of democratic activities and reforms. A central feature of the revival of ZANU–PF during the power-sharing agreement period was the development of economies of patronage. ZANU–PF managed to formalise partisan regulation over land and mineral resources through practices of patronage, corruption, coercion, systems of surveillance and state regulation (Alexander & McGregor 2013; Maguwu 2013; Moyo 2016).

In fact, Raftopoulos (2013) maintains that the period gave ZANU–PF the chance to reconstruct fractured party structures, gain control over resources, continue with elite accumulation and invoke nationalist ideological rhetoric, which in anticipation of the 2013 elections, allowed ZANU–PF to rebuild its legitimacy that nearly vanished during the 2008 political and economic crisis. The power-sharing period also allowed Mugabe to address the country's changing social base. Through a system of patronage and violence and coercion combined with ideologies of the liberation struggle, memories of colonial dispossession and the land reform process, ZANU–PF engaged with the new smallholder farmers and changed social and political relations on the land, something that the opposition struggled with. Additionally, ZANU–PF also spoke to small-scale informal artisanal miners and people who worked in the informal urban economy, whose numbers increased because these were the only accessible forms of accumulation in the context of the shrinking economy. Amidst controversy about whether the elections were free, peaceful fair and democratic, Mugabe won the 2013 elections.

The political and economic context in the second half of 2016 and first half of 2017, during which the fieldwork in this thesis was conducted, continued to be characterised by economic and political mismanagement, economies of patronage and unchanged political power relations. ZANU–PF was still holding on to power through nepotism and authoritarianism. As I described in the introduction, in an effort to address acute cash shortages and economic malaise, the government had introduced bond notes as an official national currency in November 2016. Without addressing the structural causes of the country's worsening economy and without a strong productive base and low foreign exchange combined with extensive borrowing to fund government expenditure and the bond notes, consumer prices rose, sparking fears of a repetition of the 2008 crisis. It was palpable that the economy was contracting.

As a precursor for the following three empirical chapters, I use a vignette to illuminate what the economic situation and rising consumer prices meant for urbanites' daily life in 2016 and 2017. The vignette also highlights a key aspect of the political economy of agriculture in 2016 and 2017, which is import dependency.

> **Vignette: cooking oil**
> Besides, sugar, salt, milk, tea, peanut butter, soap bars and margarine, one of the items that was part of the standard repository of products that my family-in-law bought at the supermarket was cooking oil. In Shona it is called *mafuta*, based on the English word 'fat'. It was used every day. A thick layer of cooking oil made green leafy vegetables taste rich and meat stew evidently required cooking oil. Amai used it to deep fry eggs for the eleven o'clock lunch. Oil gave flavour to food, even though it tasted and smelled bland on its own. It was a valuable good, even more so when the bottle carried a label of a respected brand. After coming home from grocery shopping, the cooking oil bottles disappeared in the master bedroom to join the mealie meal stored there. After all, the price of a two-litre bottle is three dollars, a source of frequent complaints for Baba, my father-in-law and head of the household.

> Safeguarding the oil in the most private room of the house seemed commonplace. In the summer of 2016, a television commercial featured famous pop singer Jah Prayzah waking up from a nightmare in which thieves steal a Pure Drop cooking oil bottle from his wardrobe. In the commercial, he hastily steps out of bed, grabs the bottle, caresses it and returns to bed holding the bottle of oil like a teddy bear. The slogan 'health and happiness in every drop' appeared on the screen. When Baba saw this commercial during his usual post-dinner Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) news-watching session, he was clearly annoyed. He commented: 'Ehe, you have to consume it per drop because it is *dhura*! (expensive) Ah, that doesn't bring me happiness!'.
>
> I shared my frustrations with Baba and was reminded of *The Herald* reporting about a price rise of five per cent in cooking oil because of rising prices on the international market. Shops were also experiencing cooking oil shortages due to lack of raw ingredients in the country. Cooking oil was just one of many consumer goods that were in short supply and of which prices rose (fieldnotes, 28 December 2016).

The fact that soybean cooking oil, otherwise a cheap commodity in the global food system, was a valuable commodity to be hidden in one's house reflects, besides the economic circumstances of many families, the country's dependency on imports. The need for imports stemmed from the country's declined food production capacity due to the land reform, a historical focus on cash crop cultivation (for example, tobacco), the incapacity to deal with climatic shocks and minimally functioning food processing facilities (Nyoni 2017). Considering that enduring liquidity crisis and the limited foreign exchange available required importing critical raw materials, including those for food production, this import dependency was risky, as the 2008 crisis attested to.

Relatedly, unfair and unregulated international competition had undermined the performance of the country's (food) manufacturing industries. The country's tariff regime gave industrial giant South Africa, from which the majority of food imports originated, unfair advantage over local producers. While Zimbabwean companies had to pay duty and value-added tax over imported raw materials, South African producers, being in the Southern

African Development Community (SADC) free trade area, faced reduced duty rates when exporting products to Zimbabwe (Mlambo 2017).

The government, furthermore, failed to protect the local industry from cheaper imports due to patronage politics. Goods were repeatedly brought into Zimbabwean borders in violation of trade regulations (Kachembere 2014). One of many examples is when in 2015 former vice-president Joice Mujuru allegedly bribed the Secretary for Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development to give Mujuru's family business a permit to import chickens from Brazil despite a standing ban on this type of imports (Sunday Mail 2015). She also faced accusations of instructing the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority leadership to release, without paying duty, trucks that were being held at the Beitbridge border loaded with illegally imported chickens (The Herald 2014).

Indigenisation or economic empowerment policies that the government enacted into legislation since 2008 also illuminate the central role that economies of patronage play in Zimbabwe's political economy of food as well their negative effect on the functioning of the local food and agricultural sector. Aiming to redress colonial inequalities in resource ownership, the indigenisation policy was meant to foster 'deliberate involvement of indigenous Zimbabweans in the economic activities of the country, to which hitherto they had no access, so as to ensure the equitable ownership of the nation's resources' (Government of Zimbabwe in Magure 2012). Magure (2012) and Raftopoulos (1996) both argue that legalised indigenisation processes have given ZANU–PF an opportunity to select who became members of the business elite so that they could pursue objectives aligned to party politics. One of the several laws and regulations that were implemented in 2010 was that all businesses with a certain net asset value had to comprise a minimum of fifty-one per cent indigenous shareholding.

Besides discouraging international investors (Mlambo 2017), the indigenisation policies have provided opportunities for the ruling party and its

affiliates to advance their economic interests and to gain further control over the economy, including the agricultural and food system. For example, the family of the in 2016 serving vice president Phelekezela Mphoko owns fifty-one of the supermarket Choppies (The Independent 2018). Former vice president Joice Mujuru was also under investigation regarding fraud and corruption in relation to fast-food chain Chicken Slice and abattoir Koala Park (Bulawayo24 2015). This meant that apart from home-grown food, the amount and type of food that urban residents find in their environment was partly determined by the ruling party's patronage practices.

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the role of the colonial administration in institutionalising a spatial and environmental ordering that racially divided urban space and socio-ecological systems in the interest of the settlers' quest to gain and consolidate their social, political and economic power. I have looked at the role of the colonial state in creating Southern Rhodesia's dual agricultural system, which comprised of white settler owned large-scale farms that practised a techno-scientific and export-oriented mode of agriculture on the one hand, and indigenous Zimbabweans' smallholder systems of peasant agriculture in confined reserves on the other. I have also examined how the settlers' demand for cheap labour in the city has influenced households' urban diets and urban–rural connections. I have also addressed how Mugabe's ZANU–PF party has dealt with the colonial inheritance of a deeply unequal society and economy, of which a divided agricultural system was the cornerstone, by dismantling racial resource inequality and simultaneously resorting to authoritarianism and patronage economies.

This chapter is crucial within my approach to researching foodways and urbanites' social and cultural relationships with food through a political ecology lens because it provides the basis for considering how they stand in connection to socio-ecological, spatial, political and economic processes and their power relations on different interconnected scales. The power relations

and spatial configurations that were central to the successful functioning of the colonial capitalist political economy and the creation of a value system and social hierarchy in which the white European settlers were constructed as socially and culturally superior can be placed in relation to contemporary foodways and meanings and practices of good food. Yet, this chapter also illustrates that the colonial policies of conquest and control are not all-encompassing structures that completely have determined Zimbabweans' foodways, as the elaborate pre-colonial foodways and vibrant food markets that I discussed in this chapter attest to. Furthermore, despite its economic redistribution efforts, the pursuit of economic and political power of the ruling party after independence that I have described in this chapter can also be placed in connection to contemporary foodways and valorisations of food. These connections between foodways and meanings and practices of good food on a household scale, on the one hand, and historical structural scales, on the other, become clear in the following empirical chapters.

Chapter 5: The socio-ecological narrative of good food

5.1 Introduction

What constitutes good food? How is the category of good food produced and enacted? Based on my fieldwork and interviews it became clear that valuations of good food prominently involved certain sets of values and ideas about local socio-ecological systems through which food is produced, sourced, processed and prepared. Where I highlight the different socio-cultural embodiments surrounding traditional food in this chapter, the following chapter demonstrates tangible socio-cultural expressions of modern foods. This chapter is dedicated to how meanings and practices of good food get bundled into a good food narrative, wherein good food is inextricably linked to imaginaries of local socio-ecological systems and their histories. I demonstrate how idealised food practices, meanings and spaces of good food are linked to embodied ways of being, knowing and living in *kumusha*, the rural or ancestral homeland.

I demonstrate that the narrative of good food is a project of scale making, as the local becomes a symbolic and cultural construct of good food. The narrative affirms urbanites' culinary heritage, which has emerged from unique, and what is understood as local, ways of being and knowing in *kumusha*. In the next chapter, I argue that the claim to the local scale through the good food narrative presented in this chapter can be seen as part of reclaiming power and dignity in a context where the local and traditional has been perpetually valued as inferior due to colonial value systems and its postcolonial legacies. In this chapter, I also show that the construction of the good food narrative has the power to override daily realities, other valuations of good food and various other scales simultaneously present in the local.

This chapter starts with a look into the basic elements of everyday foodways in a family setting in Chitungwiza. Even though foodways vary per family, by describing the meal sequence, setting, structure and food categories in one

family, I give an idea of foodways in, and different foods available to, other families that have similar socio-economic circumstances. This serves as a basis to situate and understand conceptions of what makes good food in this and the following two empirical chapters.

5.2 Daily food sequence, setting and structure

Daily food consumption in my Zimbabwean home was structured around a sequence of three main meals: breakfast when rising at six in the morning, tea around midday and dinner around seven o'clock. This daily pattern gave a clear rhythm to the day in the household. The meal structure of each eating occasion varied. Breakfast was carbohydrate heavy, lunch revolved around the central components of tea and bread, and dinner consisted of vegetables and protein that were built around the carbohydrates in *sadza*. In what follows, I briefly describe each meal.

The structure of breakfast existed of two components: carbohydrates and flavouring. Amai would be the first one to wake up and make a big pot of maizemeal porridge. It would be bubbling away on the stove for an hour or so while she bent over sweeping the floors. Everyone dished breakfast themselves in his or her own timing and ate it to their own liking by adding some flavouring in the form of peanut butter and/or sugar. When Baba was feeling unwell, he would eat *sadza reZviyo* (finger millet) or *sadza reMhunga* (bulrush millet), two types of a brown porridge made from indigenous millet grains.

Lunch, or tea as it was referred to, happened around noon. Often women other than Amai, including me, would prepare it and set the table. Amai would be busy looking after the children, tending to the chickens, garden or laundry or simply have a brief moment to herself. Tea was the most flexible of all daily meals. Recurring items were black tea with milk and sugar (see figure 5.1) as well as bread, margarine and marmalade. These were all served on a silver

tray, which was then placed on the dining room table that was adorned with a tablecloth that only saw daylight during tea and dinner times.

Figure 5.1 Preparing tea (with milk) at home at noon Source: photo taken by author

What the rest of this meal looked like, varied per day. Eggs were the standard option. They were most often fried in such a way that the chef had to continuously splash oil on top of the bubbling white and yellow substance in the pan. They were a cheap and convenient choice because they were readily available from Amai's backyard chickens. Mashed potatoes (which were spread on bread), sugar beans cooked with onion and tomato, boerewors (a popular sausage in South Africa) and leftover stew from previous night's dinner were other recurrent options for lunch.

Planning dinner started in the afternoon. Questions such as: 'What type of green vegetables will we use?', 'Are there tomatoes and onion in the house?' and the most important one, 'What kind of meat will be served tonight?' dominated the conversation between women in the house. As already explained, dinner had three building blocks: *sadza*, meat stew and sautéed green leafy vegetables. The latter two were usually prepared with onion, tomato and salt, but occasionally pre-packaged curry spices were added to the meat stew. Out of all the ingredients, meat required the most effort and money to obtain. If it was not still in the freezer, someone had to fetch it at the

supermarket or local butcher in the nearby shopping area. The other ingredients were readily available at home or around the corner: the fresh ingredients were obtained in the family's or neighbour's garden and, just as the cooking oil in the last vignette in the previous chapter, mealie meal was found in the bedroom.

Around seven o'clock, even if other women had prepared the food, Amai was always the one who dished the food on the plates, which were lined up on the kitchen counter. Dishing was a meticulous job, as one had to know the quantities of each meal element for each hungry person in the household. For example, Baba received the best meat, Tendai liked extra greens and I preferred to have a fist-sized portion of *sadza* instead of the usual large portions.

Dinner was seen as the 'proper' meal of the day because, as all family members were in agreement, if you have consumed *sadza* in combination with meat and vegetables, 'you have eaten properly'. It soon became clear that the criterion for food to be classified as a meal is that it should fill one's stomach and provide a comfortable warm and heavy feeling. *Sadza* was the only carbohydrate that achieves this. To many, rice, macaroni and potatoes felt fleeting because they 'disappear too quickly in your system', as Tendai told me. The other reason dinner was regarded as the main meal had to do with the commensality of the eating occasion. All family members came together for this evening ritual to enjoy each other's company and end the day. This was also the reason that, while lunch and snacks were safe to experiment with, dinner remained a safe and constant occasion that involved *sadza*, meat stew and green vegetables. This trio was only altered when times were extraordinarily dire and meat was left out or replaced with a cheap protein source like soy chunks or *matemba* (whitebait).

Figure 5.2 Preparing sadza with Amai Source: photo taken by author

This meal sequence is particular to the setting of a home where the head of the household receives a pension and his wife stays at home. In other families of similar socio-economic standing where both parents are working, breakfast and dinner are most likely to be the same, because of affordability, custom and convenience. The setting and meal structure of lunch may be different for the family members who work, formally or more likely informally, outside of the house. With a low budget, lunch would be carbohydrate heavy: a portion of *machipisi* (chips) from street vendors, sharing a loaf of bread with colleagues and putting *machipisi* or polony in between the bread slices. Christopher, a visiting extended family member, told me, 'I also would love to eat a good lunch, with a piece of fruit even! But chips fills me up and is just the cheapest at fifty cents' (fieldnotes, 21 August 2016). If one had more to spend, it would most likely be a plate of *sadza* with *matemba*, soya chunks or rape from street vendors or small eating establishments. For two or three dollars, one could get a plate of *sadza* and vegetables accompanied by a piece of meat, but this would be reserved for those with more money.

Besides the meals that form the daily meal sequence in the household, snacks also constituted a central element of basic foodways. Their consumption was not characterised by a certain sequence. They were rather eaten in social settings, out of boredom or to still hunger in between the main meals. The snacks eaten in the household were bought from vendors on the street, alongside regional roads or brought from *kumusha*. Depending on what season it was, they ranged from fruits (mango and bananas), round nuts and groundnuts in their shells or roasted in the oven, insects like *ischwa* (termites) or dried mopane worms, and indigenous fruits, such as *mazhanje* (wild loquats), *matohwe* (snot apple/African chewing gum), *nyii* (bird plum), *masawu* (dried ziziphus berry) *mauyu* (baobab fruits).

Other snack foods that were regularly bought on the street include *chibage*, roasted corn on the cob with salt. They were particularly popular in the first half of the year when it was rainy season and the maize was growing and harvested. 'That's when they are freshest!' my research assistant Tapiwa proclaimed with enthusiasm (fieldnotes, 2 March 2017) (see figure 5.3). *Machipisi* (crisps) and boiled eggs with a side of *piri piri* (spicy sauce) were also a regular snack food. Street foods to snack on in the weekend, which were always accompanied by a drink, comprised of different kinds of roasted meats: roasted chicken feet, gizzard, livers or *boerewors* (sausage). These different types of meat could also be mixed together with green vegetables in a popular dish called *gango*, named after the cooking utensil you stir-fry the ingredients with.

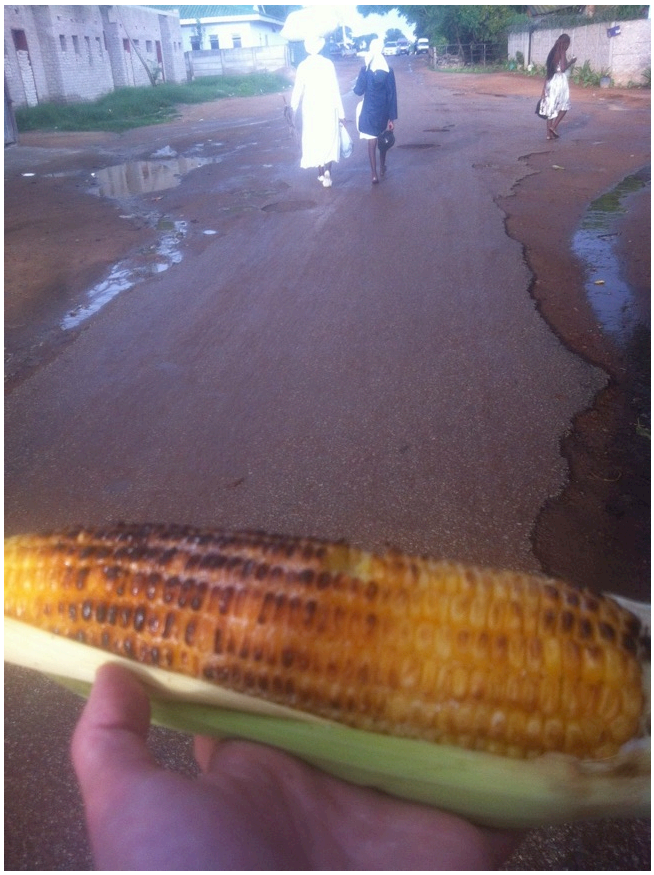

Figure 5.3 Chibage during rainy season. Source: photo taken by author

Snacks originating from the supermarket, which were often also (re)sold at corner shops and by street vendors, were also popular, particularly with young people. When I asked some of the youngsters what and when they would snack on while they were hanging out around the house and neighbourhood, they replied that they bought 'what they felt like', which ranged from pork pie, fruit and chocolate flavoured milk in small plastic bags, *maputi* (plain popcorn), *mhandire* (salted toasted corn kernels and groundnuts) and a flavoured and pasteurised version of the fermented maize meal drink *maheu*.

This description serves to highlight a number of aspects that are relevant to set the scene for the rest of this and the next two empirical chapters. It provides a social mapping of the different foods available to families in Chitungwiza. It offers a background against which to make sense of people's ideas about good food. The family's daily meal sequence reveals that moments of food consumption are well planned and offer a familiar structure

to the day. For women the day is structured first and foremost around preparation, and secondarily around consumption. For men, food mainly provided a daily rhythm of consumption. As will become clear in Chapter 7, the daily regular consumption of good food is closely connected to gender relations, as women play an important role in providing for good food. The description of foodways shows that each eating occasion is characterised by different unwritten rules and set expectations. Where breakfast and dinner are stable moments of food consumption that involve the same meal structure, setting and habits each day, lunch and snacks are more flexible in nature. The anticipation of certain foods in particular settings at specific times shapes the appropriateness of a foodstuff within the daily meal sequence. Certain foods are only acceptable during a particular moment of food consumption.

What furthermore transpires from this description is that the meal structure or the types of foods that are eaten depend on a range of factors, such as affordability, convenience, custom, mood, cravings and bodily needs. As this chapter will demonstrate, achieving the consumption of good food always has to be negotiated with these factors. Lastly, the description reveals that the food that is consumed on a single day consists of a wide variety of food types, for example, industrially produced, homemade, local wholefoods, global imported foods and regional indigenous foods. These categories are here for descriptive purposes only, as this and the following chapters will show how these are constructed and enacted in time and place.

5.3 Constructing the good food narrative

In participating in the daily rhythm of the household, it soon became clear that food was not just something to fill stomachs with. Two different bunches of green leafy vegetables, each bought at a different street vendor, could have slightly different tastes that most family members picked up immediately. All building blocks of dinner – *sadza*, green vegetables and meat – possessed certain qualities that made them outstanding or mediocre. Value judgments about how food ‘should be’ often surfaced during the mundane activities that

were part of running the household. As also explained in the introduction, good food became an ethnographic topic of interest when my ethnographic participant observation and interviews, which were focused on the broad goal of understanding people's daily foodways, came to revolve around various meanings and practices of food that participants preferred or desired to eat. Respondents did not necessarily use the word good food, but, as I also explain in section 1.6 'Main research questions', good food serves as a concept to understand the complex nature of the various food relationships that urbanites cultivate in their quest to obtain and consume the food that they desire.

The more time I spent participating in the household, helping out in the kitchen and sourcing ingredients, the more I found out what requirements needed to be fulfilled for food to qualify as good food. Starting with the idea that good food has to be produced close to local nature, in what follows, I show how the good food narrative is premised on ideas about socio-ecological systems and their social, cultural and culinary histories at the local scale.

5.3.1 Good food and socio-ecological systems

Implicit in the descriptions of this perceived good food was that the food should be produced in synchronisation with nature and, in particular, nature that was familiar and in one's vicinity. Participants often made references to respecting and following ecological processes in food production. This was a precondition for 'original', 'real', 'raw', 'natural', 'organic' and 'pure' food, which are the words participants used most to describe good food (interviews and fieldnotes in Chitungwiza, 2016–17). For example, the idea that natural processes in one's vicinity produce good food came to the fore when Jeff and I were placing buckets outside under the rim of the roof gutter to collect rainwater. '*Kurumidzai* (quick),' shouted Amai, 'we need this water!' (fieldnotes, 17 December 2016). We indeed needed the water, as the buckets of collected water from the well opposite our house became emptier every day. All household members drank water from those buckets (after boiling),

ate food cooked in it and washed themselves and their clothes in it. While looking for the most strategic placements of one of the buckets, Jeff said, referring to my earlier questions that day about what he thinks makes good food:

> This water (holds hand in the rain), you see, right now it's raining. It's not the same water as if we fetch it from tap. That is treated water, but this one is real, direct to the plants. That's how God made everything to be (gestures at the vegetable plants and trees in garden). He gives water right here, right now, to give us the most perfect food (fieldnotes, 17 December 2016).

A few days earlier, while we were peeling potatoes for mashed potatoes during lunch, Katie also referred to the connection between local nature and good food. With each peeled potato emerging from the bowl of water, the water turned a darker shade of the brown/red colour of the soil that you saw alongside the rim of the crumbled asphalt in Chitungwiza. She explained the quality of the potatoes in terms of this particular soil:

> Ours (potatoes) are the originals. Our soil is red. You see (gesturing at the brown/red water). It has all the nutrients, that's why everything tastes rich. Food doesn't need much – just our nature. It's not that difficult. It's just natural.' She compared the potatoes to what she experienced in South Africa, when she temporarily lived there to find work. 'In South Africa, the soil is different. It is white, like salt. The potatoes taste 'mm, mm',' she said disapprovingly while shaking her head from side to side (fieldnotes, 14 December 2016).

In the same way that Jeff makes a connection between the rainwater and good food, Katie also links our potatoes, our soil and our nature to good food. They both establish that food produced in harmony with socio-ecological systems at the local scale constitutes good food. Even though the word local was not used by most participants, I use it to describe the close by, immediate, micro scale, the scale that covers socio-ecological systems that are familiar, personal and proximate.

In most conversations there was implicit agreement about the characteristics and repertoire of foodstuffs that constituted the type of food that originated

from socio-ecological systems in one's familiar environment on a local scale. It was mostly described as food that participants' ancestors grew, prepared and ate. The foods were grown in harmony with the local ecosystem and biodiversity, were high in fibre, subject to minimal processing and did not contain artificial flavourings or preservatives. They were, as I mentioned before, described as: 'simple, pure, natural, organic, raw and real'. Examples were legumes, pulses, tubers, indigenous grains, wild fruits and vegetables, produce cultivated with manure and crop rotation and animal products from free-ranging or wild animals. Other food items that were mentioned when describing this type of food included: *sadza* made with indigenous grains such as sorghum, *maheu* (fermented maize and sorghum drink), offal, several types of fresh or sun-dried (*mufushwa*) green leafy vegetables (see figure 5.4), biltong, *matemba* (whitebait), sugar beans, *nyimo* (round nuts), *lacto* (curdled/sour milk), dried, mopane worms, *ishwa* (roasted flying termites) and indigenous fruits, such as *matohwe* (snot apple/African chewing gum) and *mazhanje* (wild loquat) (interviews and fieldnotes in Chitungwiza, 2016–17).

Participants referred to this body of foods as traditional foods, a word that implies that this type of food is rooted in historical cultural experience on an intimate scale. It is for this reason I also use the term traditional. This chapter partly revolves around how and why the average resident in Chitungwiza attaches various values to the category of traditional food. Where most of Chitungwiza's residents source their traditional food from their garden, family, friends and neighbours in Chitungwiza or kumusha, it is important to briefly highlight that wealthier urbanites obtain their traditional foods increasingly from the supermarket. The picture (figure 5.4) of the packaging with Nyevhe vegetables from a local supermarket shows that traditional food is emerging as a health food among the upper class. Influenced by organic and wholefoods health trends in Euro-American settings and family and friends abroad, I saw there was a growing demand for health foods among the upper class, who buy their food mostly in supermarkets. In my encounters with urbanites who lived in wealthy neighbourhoods of Harare, I observed that they

valued traditional foods as good food not only because of tradition, but mainly due to traditional foods being organic and healthy. They, for example, started to move away from eating white bread and maizemeal sadza towards indigenous grains, setting in motion a process of commodification of traditional food in supermarkets.

Figure 5.4 Traditional and natural food: Nyevhe (dried spider flower leaves)

5.3.2 Good food and *kumusha*

Indeed, in the interviews, many comments regarding good food included descriptions of contemporary and historical foodways and ways of living in *kumusha*, the rural ancestral homeland. The reason the production of food in harmony with nature was associated with this territory, is that, as opposed to city life, rural food is believed to be determined by what nature brings on a daily or seasonal basis. Ideas of food in rural areas involved nostalgic and romanticised ideas of a simple life, a type of life that participants' ancestors

lived, as participants often told me. Many participants imagined it as a place where life in its most basic form takes place.

For instance, in the following conversation, Tinashe, a bottle store employee in Johannesburg explained to me that good food is associated with a way of being and a certain attitude that are cultivated in *kumusha*:

> Me: How did you learn about what is good food?
>
> Tinashe: I grew up with grandmother, so I learned to be responsible there. My grandmother was old, so I had to help her in the gardens, the field. … ploughing and everything. I had to learn how to cook, from her especially. You know these old women. Even people say, 'Oh! Yum, this is so good. Where did you learn to cook?' Then I say, 'Oh, I grew up in rural areas, not in town.' There (rural areas) you have to be responsible (interview with Tinashe, 3 April 2017).

By responsible, he meant taking the responsibility to cultivate and prepare natural food, a predisposition and mentality one learns from staying in *kumusha* with elderly family members.

Another comment from my interview with Johannesburg-based taxi driver Sam equally highlights how food in *kumusha* was inextricably linked to a certain lifestyle, one that is connected to his cultural heritage in a specific place.

> If you go to rural areas, they are still following that culture, the real culture. Only people that grew up in town, they like to adopt some other lifestyle. Like me, I grew up in rural. I do believe that to eat veg is very, very good. Look at those people, the old people, our forefathers. Some of them they've got ninety to seventy years. They were eating vegetables, fresh meat, not like fast food (interview with Sam, 10 April 2017).

In a similar vein, an interview with hairdresser Tatenda at her salon, which ended up in a group interview with all the ladies present in the salon, exemplifies the idea that a simple life in *kumusha* facilitates the provision of

natural food. The conversation was dominated by reminiscing about the connection of certain cultural lifestyles to food production in *kumusha*, which was prompted by an indigenous wild dried fruit, *matohwe*, also referred to as African chewing gum. I brought a few *matohwe* for Tatenda, which everyone shared during our interview. The following conversation ensued.

> 'Would anyone like some?' I asked while passing the *matohwe* around when I explained what my research was about.
>
> 'Have you ever eaten this one yourself?' Tatenda asked me.
>
> '*Matohwe*,' I replied, 'Yes, of course! I love it – it tastes like figs!'.
>
> Everyone laughed.
>
> Tatenda's customer commented: 'Ehe! It's our chewing gum. We used to eat in the bush. When herding cattle, you just take this one, and you spend whole day (without eating anything else).'
>
> After nodding vehemently to show her agreement, Majory, another hairdresser chimed in:
>
> 'The kind of state of living is different (in the village). When you are in villages, you find this kind of fruits. You need villages to understand what is better food.
>
> Tatenda's customer then said: 'Exactly! Life is just *mbichana, mbichana* (slow, slow). You plough, you plant so and so with manure, you cook on fire' (interview with Tatenda, 3 February 2017).

Here, again, the question of what is good food cannot be separated from cultural and social attachments to *kumusha*. These snapshots that represent my fieldwork experience demonstrate that judgments about what makes good food are tied to idealised ways of being and living in *kumusha*. The observations reflect the various social and cultural connections that urban Zimbabweans have with their *kumusha*, which exist besides the earlier discussed economic urban–rural connections that provide urban households with a safety net. Household are not only multi-sited in nature in an economic sense, but also in a symbolic sense, because a part of urbanites' identity is rooted in *kumusha*. The land in *kumusha* plays an important role because it

carries history, and possibly for some, their ancestral lineage. Life comes from, thrives on and ends in the land according to Shona cosmology. This is, for example, reflected in the idiom of *mwana wevhu*, which refers to indigenous Zimbabweans and their ancestors and means 'children of the soil' (Chavunduka & Bromley 2012).

The cultural connections that Zimbabweans have with their *kumusha* can also be seen as being part of the Zimbabwean *hunhu* worldview, also called *ubuntu* in South Africa. It encompasses an ethics or consciousness of 'collective personhood' whereby an individual becomes a person through other people, a belief revealed in the Shona aphorism *munhu munhu nevanhu* (Museka & Madondo 2012). An individual's existence is interconnected with that of the community and the environment in which he or she lives or comes from (Sibanda 2014, p. 26). The individual takes on a representative role and symbolises his or her mostly paternal ancestors and the land they come from. For this reason, especially men are often addressed by their patrilineal *kumusha* or totem and upon meeting for the first time, Zimbabweans would enquire about one's *kumusha*. With this in mind, *kumusha* is a place that represents past foodways, culinary traditions and ways of living as well as a continuation of these at present.

My fieldwork experience, of which the above instances are a snapshot, shows that *kumusha* is a space that is filled with meanings and identities relating to agroecological smallholder circular and integrated farming systems that produce the natural type of food participants described. While this observation could be placed in relation to colonial control over indigenous agriculture, as the colonial administration forced indigenous Zimbabweans to only practice small-scale agroecological forms of agriculture, this observation could also be traced back to indigenous pre-colonial agricultural systems that used climate-adapted farming systems that integrated crops and livestock in an elaborate circular system of cultivation (Page & Page 1991), as also discussed in Chapter 4.

5.3.3. A hierarchy of chickens

I further explore the importance of *kumusha* in imagining good food and discuss the availability and meanings of different types of food by means of chicken. A description of the 'roadrunner chicken, 'village chicken' or a 'marathon chicken' was often replicated in my conversations about what makes good food. Each story about this type of chicken involved a tone of appreciation about the ecological way it was produced in the location of *kumusha* and its resultant taste. In recounting the week of preparations for the arrival of my parents, who travelled from the Netherlands to meet my family-in-law, it becomes clear how, firstly, the roadrunner chicken, as opposed to other types of chickens, symbolises the family's social and cultural connections to *kumusha*, and secondly, affirms the family's identity in the city.

Apart from cleaning the house and creating a tidy guest room, the menu needed to be decided on before my parents arrived to spend time with the family and me in Chitungwiza. Led by Amai, but with Baba chiming in with opinions, the process of thinking about what the visitors would like to eat started more than a week before their arrival date. I was tasked with deciding on the general food categories that would be eaten, as I was told: 'Sara, you know best what they like' (fieldnotes, 10 March 2017) Initially I protested a bit, as I did not want to force anything or be bothersome by making certain requests. Yet, after seeing that they wanted to be reassured that they would not serve anything unappetising and that they would be spared the humiliation of unhappy and hungry guests, I accepted my role as translator of palates. Ideas for breakfast and lunch were quite straightforward: bread with jam, eggs, avocado, tomatoes, beans and sometimes sausage. For dinner, I suggested a rotation of *sadza*, rice and potatoes as starch paired with any type of green vegetable and a beef or chicken stew.

While she seemed nervous about the whole endeavour, Amai was particularly confident about one thing: the roadrunner chicken had to feature on the menu.

She knew the flavour was immaculate and it allowed her – or perhaps rather Baba – to tell stories of where the family came from. So, out of all ingredients for the whole menu, the chicken deserved most scrutiny in evaluating its quality and suitability for guests. By being involved in the selection process of the chicken, it became apparent there was a clear hierarchy in chickens. The most eminent was the roadrunner, which was considered the ultimate delicacy – the golden standard of chickens.

The two reasons the roadrunner was considered the best chicken became clear to me when I asked what, actually, was so special about the roadrunner. I asked Baba this question when I heard him calling his brother who resided in *kumusha* if there were any *huku* (chickens) that could be shipped on a *kombi* (minivan/most common form of passenger transport) to Chitungwiza. In summary, the answer had two parts. First, because the roadrunner comes from *kumusha*, one was assured that it was of high quality, or in other words, that it was natural. Considering the chicken runs on the road and eats whatever it finds, you could be confident that during its long lifetime it had had plenty of movement and had ingested food from nature. You could trust that there was no or minimal interference in the route of chick to chicken stew. Second, the roadrunner chicken was on top of the ladder of preference because the *kumusha* grown roadrunner represented Zimbabwean culture. As it originated from *kumusha*, it symbolised ways of being, knowing and living on ancestral land. It affirmed the family's identity (fieldnotes, 10 March 2017).

While I was playing with Itai in the hallway later that day, I overheard Baba's long and at times loud second phone call to his brother in his bedroom. The words *huku* (chicken) and *muroora* (daughter-in-law) featured repeatedly in the conversation. As Baba exited his room to head off to his *chibage* hang out spot, I kept quiet as I had the feeling that the somewhat turbulent half hour lasting phone call had not yielded success. Later that day, he asked me if I wanted to come along to purchase three chickens. 'They don't have any for us at the moment in (name of *kumusha*).' (fieldnotes, 10 March 2017) The real

reason, which I suspected was tainted with family politics, was not reserved for my ears.

While zigzagging to avoid the potholes on the road, Baba explained where we were going:

> 'We're going to Irvines (a poultry distributor). They sell good quality broiler chicken. Amai needs the chicken at home for her *mazaai* (eggs). We bought that type … off layers … here as well. The vendors that sell chicken here at the shopping centre say they are selling roadrunners, but ah! I know they come from Irvines. *Tsotsi* (thiefs).'
>
> 'And, of course, they are—, *dhura* … (expensive),' I said finishing the sentence for him.
>
> 'Hahaha, yes, *dhura*! (shakes head).' (fieldnotes, 10 March 2017)

Broiler chickens from Irvines were a compromise between the roadrunner from *kumusha*, possibly fake and expensive roadrunners from street vendors and pre-packaged frozen chicken pieces from the supermarket. The latter were on the bottom of the chicken hierarchy, being the worst choice for the anticipated visitors. Considering the chicken was already cut up, which stood in the way of a proper inspection, how and where it was raised remained a mystery. Furthermore, the production in a factory was associated with chemicals, GMOs, injections and overall bad quality, associations that could not be erased by the words 'farm fresh' on the packaging (see figure 5.5). To use Amai's words, the frozen chickens 'taste like water and the bones are weak like plastic'.

Figure 5.5 Frozen chicken from the supermarket
Source: photo taken by author

That afternoon, after feathering around with their feet strapped up next to the buckets with water, Amai turned the heads of the three chickens we bought at Irvine's, plucked their feathers and cleaned them. She boiled one of them and the two others found a temporary home in the freezer, next to the goat's head that stared at me since Christmas when I opened the freezer (fieldnotes, 10 March).

The next day at the dinner table with my parents, we all ate *sadza* and chicken. Baba proudly explained the *sadza* was made from maize grown in his plot in *kumusha*. While winking at me, he said:

> 'These chickens are from a region called Seke (the district bordering Chitungwiza where Irvine's is located). We could not get some from (name), our *kumusha*. Do you also have roadrunners there?'
>
> 'No,' my father replied.
>
> 'Let me tell you … in our rural areas, chicken have always roamed around … And that is how the introduction to food production in his *kumusha* started' (fieldnotes, 12 March).

The quest to serving the right kind of 'good food' in anticipation of guests demonstrates that conceptions of what makes good food are linked to ideas of specific socio-ecological systems and their histories. Materialised in the roadrunner chicken, environmental imaginaries of food production in *kumusha* play an important role in affirming and showcasing the family's identity. Baba and Amai made effort to emphasise the family's rural roots in front of visitors. The roadrunner served as a vessel to acknowledge the social and cultural aspects of being a multi-spatial household, which was important because the urban setting in Chitungwiza did not show many similarities with 'ways of being' in *kumusha*. By saying that the chicken are from Seke District in Mashonaland East, instead of saying that they are from the poultry farm located in Chitungwiza (which is indeed in Seke and Mashonaland East), Baba creates the impression that they originate from a rural area, have cultural meaning and are therefore the best type of chickens. In doing so, he actively constructs the narrative that good and natural food come from *kumusha*.

Even though serving the roadrunner chicken was a shared endeavour of Baba and Amai, there was a clear gendered division of responsibilities. Baba was concerned with obtaining the roadrunner and Amai was responsible for preparing and cooking it. Baba was also the one who crafted the narrative of good food to others, considering he was the head of the household and considering a Zimbabwean family's identity and *kumusha* are generally based on the patrilineal lineage. In Chapter 7 I elaborate further on the negotiations that happen around the gender dynamics in providing for what people consider is good food.

The fieldwork experience around chicken shows that environmental imaginaries are important in understanding what is good food. The hierarchy of chickens was constructed based on the extent to which food production in line with nature was guaranteed. *Kumusha* as an idealised space of

agroecological food production provided the assurance it was produced in local nature. The imaginary that the roadrunner runs on the road eating nature is part of the discursive production of the natural good food narrative. The roadrunner is an example of how food production in the space of *kumusha* is idealised and romanticised, because, as I later elaborate on, Baba also admitted that chicken in *kumusha* are also fed pre-packaged chicken feed.

5.3.4 Good food and the nourishing taste of nature

Besides food receiving the label of good by virtue of it coming from local and cultural socio-ecological systems, for most participants it was hard to exactly pinpoint what characteristics made it good. What was so good about food from local nature or that originated from or was associated with *kumusha*? In what follows, I describe instances where answers to this question came to the fore. The fieldwork experiences show that natural and traditional food are perceived as good by participants because they taste pure and taste like nature and because they are nourishing. I define nourishing food as food that enhances growth, health and good condition.

The sourcing of vegetables for dinner was a daily instance when it became clear that in order to obtain good-tasting vegetables, their production should occur in harmony with ecological processes and the rhythms of nature.

> Precious and Amai asked me to buy *covo*, the green leafy vegetable used for relish, on my grocery round in Chitungwiza. They both agreed they had to give me specific instructions, because Precious, as direct as she was, doubted if I had the skills to recognise the right bunch of *covo*.
>
> Precious told me that she knew very well to recognise good quality vegetables, a skill she learnt from her grandmother in *kumusha*. Precious always compared different vendors.
>
> Amai chimed in and said to me: 'You should not go to that vendor on the corner like last week. They were sour,' she said disapprovingly. 'Just like the ones from Tilda (the neighbour). That's how you know people use too much fertiliser'.

> I had heard Amai gossiping about the neighbour Tilda, who sold her produce on the corner of our street. Besides that she apparently shouted inappropriately at her children, she was also greedy. According to Amai, she used too much fertiliser in order to grow her *covo* faster and to make more profit.
>
> Precious continued to explain that:
>
> 'The vegetable is best when you let it grow naturally. When it matures on its time, not like to help it to mature and all.'
>
> Precious agreed wholeheartedly: 'Ehe! To get the original vegetable and the original taste, just use water and sometimes manure. Fertiliser makes it grow fast. Manure makes it grow strong.'
>
> 'To have nice and healthy food, Amai responded, 'You have to give it time to grow until it is ready. Then you say: Ah! Now the veg are OK, the chickens are OK, now you can eat.' (fieldnotes, 24 August 2016)

This dialogue is indicative of many other instances when family members and interview participants made clear that producing food in line with naturally occurring ecological processes, instead of manipulating them with chemical compounds, yielded good tasting food. The description of how one should grow vegetables reflects a certain attitude towards food production: one needs to have patience, to pay nature respect and to not interfere with its processes. Only then food tastes pure and like nature. As Precious refers to her grandmother in *kumusha*, this attitude is linked to socio-ecological systems in *kumusha*. Considering the judgment towards Tilda, it is clear that using fertiliser does not honour this disposition vis-à-vis nature.

In the same way that Precious talked about the original taste of *covo*, others used the words 'intensive', 'natural', 'pure', 'fresh' and 'real' to describe the taste of good food. The crucial question in valuing the gustatory aspect of food seemed to be: to what extent is, to borrow Baba's words, 'the taste of nature', foregrounded? Extensive use of fertiliser, too many spices and overcooking food were all frequently mentioned elements that interfered with achieving the pleasure of tasting nature. One of the main measures of good food, thus, lies in the extent to which the ingredient in its purest form is honoured.

The taste of good food was often understood in relation and opposition to what many called 'chemical food'. Like Amai complained about the sour tasting *covo*, I heard repeatedly that the chemical substance robbed vegetables of their natural taste. Food grown with fertiliser was described as 'food with injections, food that tasted weak, watered-down, fake and like chemicals' (interviews and fieldnotes, 2016–17). One teenage friend of Tendai told me jokingly that chemical food was 'zhing zhong', referring to the many Chinese products sold in street stalls and shops that broke too soon (fieldnotes, 11 February). Walter, a *kombi* (minivan) driver I was introduced to by Tapiwa, explained the pure taste of natural food and the unpleasant taste of chemicals with the type of drink he paired his food with. I asked him how he knew he was eating natural food, and he replied:

> With our food, I can go and drink water. Lots of people drink cold drinks, but I drink water because … this is a proper food, because if you eat something and you go for a drink it means that it was not nice. That it had those chemicals. Now you are trying to kill that thing with Coke, Sparletta (a local brand of soda) or whatever. When you eat good food, you drink water (interview with Walter, 6 January 2017).

Another implicit assumption in the dialogue with Amai and Precious is that 'natural' food is perceived as more nourishing. According to Amai, giving plants time to grow is a precondition for 'nice and healthy' food. Precious similarly advocated for following the rhythms in nature, which will yield strong plants, with strong being a metaphor for the dense nutrition in the vegetable.

Indeed, during my fieldwork, I noticed that food in its most natural state was considered good because it was nourishing and essential in maintaining a healthy body. The connection between nature, food and bodies is an association that often resurfaced during participant observation and interviews. For example, when on my way to buy some fruits at the neighbourhood's small collection of fresh produce stalls, I bumped into one of

Baba's friends, Clifford, who explained passionately why he favoured traditional and natural, or in his words, 'original' food:

> When I eat my food, he said, I feel like I'm eating food now, like original food. At least I feel energy in my body. I'll be strong (fieldnotes, 12 January 2017).

The idea that natural food is nourishing also surfaced in the belief that organic and unrefined foods are particularly good for sick people and the elderly. This association became apparent in different ways in the interviews. When I asked whether and how often people would eat natural and traditional foods, a recurring theme in the answers was that they would mostly eat it when someone was not feeling well, besides eating it occasionally when they returned from the rural homeland or at special occasions (for example, church gatherings or traditional ceremonies). This corresponds with my own observations at home in Chitungwiza, where, when Baba caught the flu, Amai served him a repertoire of dishes that I had not seen before.

To obtain the necessary ingredients for Baba's healing, I accompanied Tendai to the small stall on the side of the road next to the shopping centre. Measured in the typical enamel cups, the shop owner, who wore a white overall like a pharmacist, scooped millet, sorghum and mutakura (a mixture of maize, nuts and pulses) from large sacks. In the following week, besides hot water with lemon and ginger, Baba ate a diet of sorghum porridge in the morning, sweet potatoes or okra soup for his midday tea and for dinner *sadza* made out of finger millet or sorghum with *muboora* (pumpkin leaves) *tsunga ne dovi* (mustard greens with peanut butter) and dried mushrooms mixed with peanut butter for dinner. When I looked with fascination at the okra soup that had a slimy green appearance, Baba had to laugh. Hinting at the, for me, odd appearance of the dish, he said: 'Yes, Sara, eating traditional means commitment.' After a week staying in bed watching BBC and Al Jazeera and wandering around the house, he went to meet his friends at the roast *chibage* stand around the corner where he usually gathered with his friends. After this silent sign that he was feeling better, he ate with gusto his regular diet of white

maize porridge for breakfast, bread with marmalade for lunch and *sadza*, vegetable relish and meat for dinner again.

Another way in which the assumption that natural food has nourishing properties became apparent in the data was that many participants said traditional food was prescribed by medical authorities. A comment that Collin, a car parts salesman in his forties, made, exemplifies this:

> If you get sick and go to hospital, they tell you straight: you must eat raw food. Even the food they serve: they make potatoes, pumpkins, all that stuff. You find that people are prescribing those things people eat in *kumusha* to people that have sugar (diabetes), are HIV positive, with tuberculosis, cancers (interview with Collin, 18 January 2017).

Collin was a gentleman with HIV/AIDS that took this advice to heart. He told me that he was 'selective about my food', because, in his circumstances, it was especially important 'to eat healthy and traditional, like in *kumusha*'. In his family, he was the only one who endeavoured to eat like this. His wife was not convinced of why she and their daughter should eat the same when they were not sick. So he took it upon himself to provide his body with food that, as he put it, 'kills diseases' (interview with Collin, 18 January 2017)

For example, he made sure that when he would eat *sadza*, he would eat *mugaiwa*, mealie meal from the *chigayo*, the grinding mill. He explained that, as opposed to Pearlenta (a commercially produced and highly refined type of mealie meal), 'the more natural type of mealie meal, you know, straight run, at least has something to offer'. The name of straight-run mealie meal, which is the same as *mugaiwa*, stems from the fact that the maize runs straight through the mill, without forming a by-product through a refining process. It is produced by milling maize kernels through a hammer mill, incorporating the grain husk and germ in the end product. By saying straight-run has something to offer, Collin referred to the nourishing benefits of consuming the entire maize kernel. He explained it gives him, to use his own words, 'roughage for good digestion' (fibre), 'energy to be strong' (unrefined carbohydrates keep

blood sugar level steady) and 'vitamins' (from the grain husk and germ) (interview with Collin, 18 January 2017).

The idea that traditional and natural food is nourishing and aid in curing a sick person and maintain a healthy body surfaced in the repeated connections people made between traditional food and the older generation. Traditional food was perceived to be for elderly people. Several people jokingly referred to Mugabe's diet when the topic of natural food and health came up. It was generally known that he ate a traditional diet, as he often publicly emphasised the importance of a traditional diet for a long life (BBC 2014). A comment of Nokutenda, a mother of two working as a trader in the informal economy, exemplifies the gist of such remarks:

> The old man is still there because of what he eats! He eats all-natural, like our ancestors! (interview with Nokutenda, 13 February 2017)

A guiding thread through all these encounters is that the two characteristics of good food – good food is nourishing and tastes like nature – are associated with cultural connections to *kumusha*, tradition and ancestors. They show that participants assume that if food comes from a local shared heritage and socio-ecological systems in *kumusha,* it is a guarantee of food that is tasteful and nourishing. These associations are all part of building the good food narrative in which good food is linked to ideas of local socio-ecological systems and their histories.

5.4 Complicating the traditional and natural good food narrative

The majority of participants crafted and believed in the traditional and natural good food narrative that I have presented in this chapter. In doing so, they partly used idealised and romanticised imaginations of natural and traditional food production at the local scale. In my interactions, some participants complicated the narrative, while others gave answers that confirmed the narrative, because they truly vehemently believed in it or because they wanted to present a coherent story for my research project. Baba was

someone who complicated the idea of good food being solely traditional and natural. When I, for instance, asked how to define traditional food during dinner at home in Chitungwiza, Baba remained unusually quiet while everyone described traditional food along the lines of my earlier description. Baba seemed to have been pondering on my question, as after dinner during his usual news watching session, he remarked that there, actually, was no clear-cut definition of traditional and natural food. He said:

> What is traditional food anyway? They (Zimbabweans) want the chicken in *kumusha*, but they feed it with chemical feed! They say, 'Hmm it tastes so natural', including myself (laughing), but we ignore what we gave to the chickens (fieldnotes, 24 August 2016).

He also contemplated on the fact that he used fertiliser and monocropping for his maize plot in his *kumusha*, even though he considered the mealie meal that it yielded as natural, traditional and simply unsurpassed. As I also demonstrate in the next chapter, good food is thus not necessarily tied to agroecological ways of farming or tradition. Baba's reflections show how the good food narrative is so deeply ingrained that it has the potential to overwrite or ignore daily nuances and realities of food production and foodways in general.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that foodways and meanings of good food stand in close connection to local socio-ecological systems and their cultural histories. I have shown how participants construct a good food narrative on the basis of their knowledge of, and experiences with, social, cultural and ecological dispositions in *kumusha*. The core idea of the narrative, that good food was nourishing and pure because it was produced in harmony with local ecological systems, is based on imaginaries about ways of being, knowing and living in *kumusha*. The narrative reveals that multi-spatial households' urban–rural connections are, besides economic (*kumusha* providing a safety net in times of duress), also social and cultural in nature.

The ideas about good food presented in this chapter show how participants discursively act upon ecological food production systems, which epitomises the concept of socio-ecological relations in political ecology. In this sense, the narrative of traditional and natural good food illuminates that the social and natural realms are relational and in a constant state of interaction and transformation.

The socio-ecological relations coming to the fore in conceptions of good food are central to the construction of the local scale, as the good food narrative is premised on ideas about socio-ecological systems and their cultural and culinary histories on the local scale. The narrative is a project in scale making, not in the interest of strategic political ends, but in terms of serving social and cultural functions. As the stories and encounter in this chapter demonstrate, the narrative about the local scale – and the natural and nourishing good food it produces – allows urbanites to connect with their culinary history and affirm their identity.

Keeping in mind political ecology's focus on a politics of scale, this chapter demonstrates that meanings of good food and the associated local space stand in relation to, for example, policies instituted by the colonial and post-independence state. I have discussed that the social and cultural dispositions originating in *kumusha* that are central to the good food narrative are partly connected to the colonial control of agriculture and socio-ecological systems and partly to indigenous peasant histories. This shows how the narrative of local, natural good food spans across different scales of power relations involving racism, colonialism and capitalism. As I also mention in the methodology and conclusion in regards to the shortcomings of this thesis, it would have been insightful to better understand how the good food narrative is enacted by different actors at different scales. While it is certainly part of my future research plans, unfortunately, considering different actors is currently beyond the scope of this thesis, because due to practical obstacles during

fieldwork I have not been able to interview various actors in the food security arena in Zimbabwe.

All in all, the narrative of good food outlined in this chapter counters the dominant crisis narratives of food in urban Africa that I have discussed in the introduction, because the construction of a good food narrative highlights people's multifaceted and complex social and cultural relationships to food. The next chapter shows how this narrative is acted upon and negotiated in the face of various other scales that are simultaneously present at the local scale that produces good food. Where this chapter has demonstrated various socio-cultural embodiments of good food, the next chapter reveals their contradictions as well as various other meanings of other types of foods that are available to families in Chitungwiza on a daily basis.

Chapter 6: Negotiating the narrative: navigating binary valorisations of good food

6.1 Introduction

This chapter situates the good food narrative and the accompanying socio-environmental imaginaries of good food presented in the previous chapter in relation to other less obvious and more contradictory valuations of good food. The previous chapter opened with a description of a family's meal sequence and structure. The account revealed that the family's daily food consumption patterns consisted of a range of different types of food, which can be classified as traditional, modern, processed, unrefined, and so on. Some of the foods, like sorghum porridge and home-grown mealie meal, fit the socio-environmental imaginaries presented in the same chapter. They are natural, nourishing and come from, or are associated with, *kumusha*. Other foods that family members consumed, like pork pie and cornflakes, did not belong in the traditional and natural food narrative. During the first few months of my fieldwork, they became hidden behind the overriding power of the narrative. Yet, as I talked to a wider variety of people and engaged in different activities, such as going to Chicken Inn and baking cakes, I saw that foods based on ideas of progress, development, modernity and social hierarchies, which that were seen as the opposite of natural and traditional, could also be considered as good.

This chapter shows how foods that were industrially produced and had foreign and modern connotations were consumed alongside, for some a strong belief in, and for others, a complete rejection of the traditional and natural good food narrative. This chapter chronicles different accounts of the ways in which people deal with, construct and shift between values within binary valorisations of good food involving traditional and modern foods. Contrary to what the traditional and natural food narrative implies, this chapter demonstrates that there is no stable and a priori category of good food. Just as in the previous chapter, the stories in this chapter show how the category

of good food is produced and enacted in time and place. The encounters I describe in this chapter show a binary valorisation of good food that involves contrasting values and practices relating to tradition and modernity, which for some participants were more commensurable than for others. I show how, using these opposing values around good food, some urbanites contest and negotiate the meaning of the local scale as is constructed through the narrative presented in the previous chapter.

In this chapter, I furthermore look at how historically situated ecological, socioeconomic and political processes (colonial racial–environmental ordering, colonial social hierarchies, postcolonial politics of nepotism and authoritarianism) can be placed in relation to contemporary binary food valorisations.

6.2 Tapiwa and binary valorisations of good food

> The thing is … they say they want to eat roadrunner because it is the best, while they are sitting in Chicken Inn, devouring a chicken wing. (fieldnotes, 8 January 2017)

That is what my friend and research assistant Tapiwa said while we were in the Chicken Inn fast-food restaurant having a break from doing interviews. His comment captures the essence of a binary valorisation of food, a common dynamic that I observed in my interviews and participant observation. Participants passionately believed in the traditional and natural food narrative, which included a rejection of chemical food and food produced beyond immediate socio-ecological systems. Yet, at the same time they enjoyed and were drawn to industrially processed foods that were perceived as foreign, like Chicken Inn.

Even though the socio-environmental imaginaries of good food outlined in the previous chapter were presented as a coherent narrative, in practice, I observed that good food could also mean processed and industrial food. Yet, this type of good food rarely featured in my discussions with participants.

Thoroughly enjoying a chicken wing, for example, did not fit within the natural food narrative that participants often presented to me. Perhaps participants believed so strongly in the narrative that it did not occur to them that in their daily life, industrially produced foods were, in fact, also a part of their food consumption preferences. Another possibility is that participants, being proud of their identity, especially towards me as an outsider, wanted to present a coherent story about Zimbabwean good food, leaving out thoughts and practices that did not suit the traditional and natural food narrative.

The following fieldwork experiences with Tapiwa show that traditional and natural socio-environmental imaginaries of good food exist besides daily practices and valuations of good food that do not adhere to these imaginaries. My interactions with Tapiwa also demonstrate that aspiring to and indeed consuming processed non-local and non-natural foods does not diminish or devalue one's commitment to, and belief in, the natural food narrative.

After I asked Mai Anita, a church friend of Amai's, if she could give me an example of a typical Zimbabwean food, she told me about *mufushwa*, sun-dried green leafy vegetables that 'our people in *kumusha* eat'. She told me that her family in *kumusha* lay the vegetables, most often *munyevhe*, spider flower leaves, and *munyemba*, cowpea leaves, in the sun as a way of preserving them for the dry season. I asked what *mufushwa* tasted like. Tapiwa patiently waited for her to explain that they could taste bitter, but that a bit of peanut butter would soften the flavour. He then offered to prepare and eat *mufushwa* together in the coming week (interview with Mai Anita, 6 February 2017).

In his small kitchen in Mbare, Tapiwa showed me how to wash the crumbled, crispy and blackened dried leaves properly. It was imperative to wash away the sand in them. During this process, he told me how his family dries the leaves in *kumusha* and how he always eats it when he is there, especially in winter. He also added: 'And you know, this *mufushwa* is better for your

digestion than to eat fresh *munyemba*. Our ancestors knew what they were doing.' While the *mufushwa* was simmering away in some water on the stove's only functioning plate, we sliced the onions and tomatoes. 'I know that Mai Anita said you should eat it with *dovi* (peanut butter), but I like it with onion, tomato and salt. But no, really the best is mixed with beef or goat stew.' After an hour or two, we ate the *mufushwa* with some *sadza* sitting on his back porch overlooking his small garden where he grew *covo*, tomatoes and onions. When I commented on how delicious the meal was, he promised that he would provide me with some *mufushwa* as well as *dovi* by the time I would be returning to, as he called the West or the place where white people live, 'Babylon'. 'So that they know what they are missing,' he said with a wide grin (fieldnotes, 12 February 2017). He was clearly proud of his culinary heritage and wanted me to introduce Zimbabwean delicacies to my family and friends in the same way that food items from abroad have been introduced to Zimbabwe and gained the status as something special. He wanted me to regard Zimbabwean food culture on an equal level as European foods.

When the end of my stay in Zimbabwe was nearing, I found out that Tapiwa kept his promise when I was visiting his mother in Mbare, the country's oldest township. After having a cup of tea and greeting neighbours who stopped by to meet me, handed me the *dovi* that was ground by hand in *kumusha*, but she was adamant I had to come back the next day, because Tapiwa had told her to place an order for *mufushwa* with her acquaintance. Tapiwa preferred me to receive the dried vegetables from her, because she was one of the few vendors whose *mufushwa* did not contain too much sand.

When I texted Tapiwa the next day to inform him that I was about to head to his mother's house to collect the *mufushwa*, he asked me to buy fried chicken, chips and soda from Chicken Inn. For him, my presence offered him a last chance to eat such a relatively expensive four-dollar (USD) meal. And so as I drove to Mbare amid an inescapable strong smell of fried food, I took inspiration to respond to Tapiwa' text from the slogan appearing on the red

and white packaging on the adjacent chair: 'I am on my way with "The original Zimbabwean taste we luv".' He replied: 'kkkkk[1] you are funny Sara. *Maita basa* (thank you, very much)*'* (fieldnotes, 25 March 2017).

Tapiwa laughed about the irony of the slogan I was teasing him with. The same Tapiwa who, using the natural food narrative, proudly and enthusiastically taught me about 'original, Zimbabwean' *mufushwa*, was also yearning for industrially processed fried chicken that was likely produced with, in the words of many participants, 'chemicals'. It did not surprise me when he asked me to bring him a meal deal. I had noticed that fast-food brands meant something more to him than just food. For example, on road trips where at resting areas we were greeted by a strip of Pizza Slice, Chicken Slice and Creamy Slice or Baker's Inn, Chicken Inn and Pizza Inn, he was the first to make his order after having discussed all the options with the staff member behind the counter. Later in the evening, I would see selfies with a pizza in front of smiling faces appearing on his WhatsApp updates.

Figure 6.1 Waiting for our order at Baker's Inn and Chickenn Inn. Source: photo taken by author.

[1] 'Kkkkk' is a written expression of laughter commonly used among Zimbabweans on social media.

The carefully selected meal deal or pizza toppings were a way to celebrate the freedom to choose what to eat in a space that provided a temporary escape from daily life. The orderly and predictable restaurants, brightly lit, plastered with logos, slogans and pictures of smiling faces enjoying food, represented hope, a departure of his daily life, in which there was always an issue to be dealt with. One day the issue was his sister-in-law and her three children, whom his brother, now living in Namibia apparently with an old and rich woman, left to fend for themselves. Another day it was picking up his friend from the streets who was addicted to drinking cough syrup. Other days it was looking for water to cook *sadza*, finding the money to pay for his daughter's school fees. The following week it was bringing his nephew to a clinic because a group of men raped him, purportedly because a *muroyi* (witch) promised them prosperity through this action. Yet another day, he had to 'fix' (beat up) the lodger who was staying in the second room in his mother's house and who, after Tapiwa had kicked him out because he refused to pay rent, had left excrement in the empty room. These types of daily issues seemed endless.

I considered not mentioning the last two issues in this thesis, because they are rather graphic and disturbing, but I decided to include them, since these were issues Tapiwa had to deal with in his daily life. They represent the mental load, physical stress and structural violence that urban residents of a low socio-economic standing bear in Zimbabwe. Structural violence refers to the systematic ways in which social structures constrain individuals' choices and behaviour and thereby physically harm or otherwise disadvantage (Farmer 1992; 2004). The various forms of structural violence that most of my participants had to deal with can be understood in relation to, as discussed in Chapter 4, a deeply unequal society, of which the foundations were laid during colonialism, and a political economy of authoritarianism and patronage economies in the postcolonial period.

Figure 6.2 A Chicken Inn restaurant in Harare's CBD. Source: photo taken by author

Besides that Chicken Inn provided a form of escapism from structural violence, the fast-food restaurants, their brands and products, also represented a desired identity, social status and prestige, partly due to their 'foreign' appeal and partly due to the higher cost. This became particularly clear when Tapiwa told me that especially women like to be taken out to Chicken Inn. This act represented that he was someone of particular social and economic standing. During the same lunch break in Chicken Inn, he told me:

> Especially women want Chicken Inn. If you make it at home (chips and chicken) … No, it's not the same. That's like that *matemba* (whitebait) fish and chips picture I sent you (both laughing loud). You have to come here. It gives you respect. You can't bring a girl to where we went yesterday (the locally-owned restaurant where we had a plate of *sadza* for lunch). That's just poor. Ah! She'll walk away! (fieldnotes, 13 January 2017).

Out of the many memes circulating in Zimbabweans' WhatsApp group chats, Tapiwa had sent me a meme depicting an attempt to recreate fish and chips

with *matemba* (see figure 6.3) in response to an interview where we discussed *matemba*, salted dried whitebait, usually prepared with some onion and tomato and eaten with *sadza*.

Figure 6.3 'Fish n Chips' meme
Source: WhatsApp conversation with Tapiwa 13 January 2017

The interview participant associated it with times of duress, because *matemba* was generally a substitute for when meat was unaffordable. By contrast, taking a woman to Chicken Inn demonstrated that you were able to make sacrifices and save up for a meal and that you were a man who was able to provide and who was modern. Organising a date at Chicken Inn also showed that you cared, that you put thought into bringing a date to a different and modern environment. The modern setting of Chicken Inn was perceived as elevated from locally-owned street restaurants and was used to portray an image or identity of a higher social standing towards others.

The interactions with Tapiwa around *mufushwa* and fast-food restaurants like Chicken Inn demonstrate a binary valorisation of food. He had affinity for two types of food that are opposites: traditional and natural food from *kumusha* and chemical and foreign food from Chicken Inn. He liked food from *kumusha* because it affirmed his Zimbabwean identity. It provided a sense of self, dignity and representation of his cultural and culinary heritage. He loved fast food because it facilitated alternative reality and a temporary different social status.

The expression of identity and attainment of an elevated social status through consumption of foreign and modern commodities and experiences in a postcolonial society can be linked to social hierarchies and value systems instituted and expressed during colonialism, as Western culture and its commodities gained a superior status within a colonial order (Wilson 2013; Miller 1994; Wilk 1999). These social hierarchies were, among other ways, instituted through socio-ecological systems. In Chapter 4, I have demonstrated that a colonial spatial and environmental ordering created a social and culinary hierarchy in which, food consumed in white urban spaces (imported Western food) and food produced through what was established as a white form of agriculture (large-scale, techno-scientific industrial agriculture). Another example related to colonial control of the black labour force, also discussed in Chapter 4, is that the colonial administration exerted control over early urban labourers' diets and later urban households' diets through the food rations they received from employers. Labourers and their families purposefully did not receive Western foods (white bread, tinned food and other processed foods) to keep intact a culinary hierarchy in which Western food was a marker of cultural supremacy.

In the post-independence era, this engrained culinary hierarchy did not suddenly cease to exist. Western food products were still associated with a political and economic elite, albeit this elite now consisted of black Zimbabweans. Despite efforts to redistribute wealth after independence and during land reform, because of ZANU–PF's claims to political and economic power, at its core Zimbabwe remained an unequal society in which the elite was not distinguished anymore by their skin colour, but by their political connections to the ruling party and liberation war veterans. Despite their anti-colonial and nationalistic rhetoric, Western foodways still represented a high social status and offered one of many avenues to exhibit the elite's political and economic standing.

Figure 6.4: Tapiwa in front of an open air restaurant that serves sadza. Source: photo taken by author

Yet, when taking into consideration the passion and pride that Tapiwa had for the traditional and natural food narrative within his binary valorisation of food, it becomes clear that the colonial order has also had other effects than internalising this order. One could say that the inferior status within the colonial order fuelled Tapiwa's pride in his culinary heritage. Despite the consistent and continuous decimation of indigenous black Zimbabwean culture during colonialism, black Zimbabweans have always had a food culture they were also proud of, as the vibrant markets and informal economy described in Chapter 4 attest to. The interactions described above show that traditional Zimbabwean foods such as *mufushwa* were a way for Tapiwa to distance himself from externally exposed cultural rules and norms, to retrieve dignity, to take ownership over his foodways and to feel free to express himself in a way that felt authentic to him.

The fact that Tapiwa belongs to the generation that grew up with stories of the liberation struggle and a belief in Mugabe's nationalistic and anti-colonial rhetoric may also have played a role in his passion for traditional and natural

food. Moreover, in contrast to the younger generation, most of Tapiwa's generation spent their youth in the two decades after independence working in the fields or herding cattle in *kumusha* during the school breaks. For his generation it was also common to have lived with grandparents in *kumusha* while parents worked in the city.

Not only was this type of mobility of children and youth crucial to the economic strategies of multi-spatial households, it also had social and cultural reasons and functions. A common theme in my interviews among parents who were over thirty years old was that they regretted that their children did not spend extended periods in *kumusha* anymore. Based on their own experience of growing up in between the city and *kumusha*, they often wanted their children to also embody the traditional and natural food narrative outlined in the previous chapter. They wanted their children to be taught values and a disposition related to ways of living in *kumusha*, such as discipline, responsibility, respect for elders, nature, the land and the family's cultural heritage. Below I explain how and why this dynamic has changed.

6.3 The young generation and the meanings of urban and rural food

Most of the younger participants that I engaged with during my fieldwork, who were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, did not value good food in a binary fashion. Unlike Tapiwa, who positively valued modern and foreign foods alongside a strong belief in the natural food narrative, the majority of youngsters were, on the one hand, enthralled by what they perceive are foreign and modern foods, as they represented novelty, trends and the future. On the other, they mostly shunned natural foods from *kumusha*. The encounters that I describe below reveal that they value food from the rural sphere as negative and food from urban environments as positive. These spatial associations can be understood in relation to racial spatial ordering and the accompanying value system instituted during colonialism. The city was made to be a civilised modern space for Westerners and the reserves in rural areas were framed and regulated as inferior places, void of a

sophisticated culture and even barbaric, considering, as I also write in Chapter 4, Rhodes urged settlers to ensure Africans 'continue in a state of barbarism and communal tenure' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009, p. 83).

The younger generation associated the socio-ecological imaginaries of traditional and natural food from *kumusha* with scarcity, suffering and a violent past. Food produced in harmony with nature, and that looked and tasted like nature, was not considered something positive or that belonged in the good category. Many youngsters I talked to believed that someone who directly relied upon nature to eat food had to be poor, because they could not afford to buy food. They had to work on the land and that type of manual labour in the dirt was linked to a lower social status. They wanted to be removed or elevated from nature. Moreover, many young participants thought that using agroecological farming methods to produce natural food, which required manure and more physical work in the fields, meant that you did not have money to buy fertiliser and your way of producing food was backward and lagged behind (interviews and fieldnotes, 2016–2017).

These associations with the local socio-ecological systems stemmed from the anguish and torment that they had experienced or heard about in relation to 'working in the fields' in *kumusha* (fieldnotes, 5 March 2017). Only a few youngsters had experience of working in the fields during school breaks. Others, like Tendai, heard their parents talk about it when they complained of doing chores in the household. After Tendai, once again, nagged about doing the dishes, I heard Baba say numerous times: 'Ah! Aiwa, you call this hard work? When I was growing up …, ' and a story would usually follow about how he worked from dusk till dawn in the fields for days on end (fieldnotes, 5 March 2017) .

The negative associations with nature, *kumusha* and the rural can be linked to the colonial past, in particular to colonial policies that involved racial–environmental ordering and that created social hierarchies and value systems

in which the rural and rural work were devalued. As was central to Chapter 4, the creation of a dual agrarian structure to advance settlers' capitalist interests in the agricultural sector can be connected to the youngsters' rejection of agroecological farming methods, which involve a close relationship with nature. The Rhodesian settlers regarded the white commercial farming sector as the holy grail of farming, because it produced cash crops for export, high yields, large profits and used modern technologies.

By contrast, settlers approached agriculture and indigenous agroecological knowledge in the reserves with denigration. The type of farming that indigenous Zimbabweans practised was seen as primitive, unskilled, labour intensive and in need of civilisation, as I have described in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) in relation to colonial state's coercive interventions in smallholder black farming in the reserves. As I elaborate on below, the notion of 'backwardness' in the reserves was reinforced by the fact that settlers initially constructed the city as a white civilised space where tribal and primitive Africans were visitors who belonged in rural spaces.

Another reason many of the younger participants held negative values towards food from *kumusha* could be that they are second or third generation urban residents with decreasing connections to *kumusha*. During an interview with Nyarie and her colleague Chipo, both nurses in their thirties, in Johannesburg a conversation about changing urban–rural connections emerged:

> Nyarie explained: 'Nowadays most of people are no longer going to rural areas. They are now staying in town … most of them don't go. Some will have agriculture in *kumusha*, some no longer have.'
>
> Chipo followed up by saying: 'Everyone is now moving for greener pastures in urban areas. Some have totally abandoned their *kumusha*, maybe because their parents or grandparents have passed away so there's no one to visit in *kumusha'* (Interview with Nyarie and Chipo, 20 April 2017).

By saying that some people had agriculture in *kumusha*, she referred to the economic strategies of multi-spatial households to diversify their urban livelihoods. Like my family, many families grew maize, vegetables or raised cattle in their *kumusha*. Baba, for example, travelled once per month to *kumusha* to oversee the farming processes and instruct the rural family members who were occupied with the day-to-day maintenance of the land, crops and cattle. After harvesting season, he would deliver the maize cobs to the miller and brought home large and heavy bags of straight-run mealie meal. For Baba his agricultural endeavours in *kumusha* were besides economic in nature, also social and cultural. Apart from boasting about roadrunner chickens and the *sadza* made from mealie meal from *kumusha* during the dinner with my parents that I described in the previous chapter, in our conversations Baba often referred to his cultural responsibility to grow food in *kumusha*. For example, when he told me that one of his friends from his time at the police admitted to him that he nowadays bought Pearlenta instead of growing maize in *kumusha*, he said:

> If you have *kumusha*, and if you are not busy planting in this season, it shows your life is not really in order … how can I say … that you do not take your culture seriously (fieldnotes, 10 November 2016).

The youngsters, thus, may not feel strongly connected to *kumusha* anymore, because of a lack of an economic, social and cultural base there.

Furthermore, my fieldwork shows that the younger generation had become disillusioned with the political establishment and the current economic climate that it had created through years of authoritarianism and nepotism. The unequal power relations in Zimbabwean society had disadvantaged them to the point where they were looking for a departure from the status quo and the past. As food from *kumusha* represented the past, it did not fit within their search for a different future.

Maita, a fifty-year-old teacher and family friend of Tapiwa said:

> My daughter told me the other day that that life in Zimbabwe is finished, a book that is closed. Right now I want to write a new book, she told me. If she thinks that about life in Kuwadzana, why would she even want to go to *kumusha*?! They face rejection. They have anger. They want to move out. They look at what their family members abroad are doing (interview with Maita, 3 February 2017).

Her son, Taku, similarly wanted a departure from the type of life his parents had lived. During my interview with him, he told me:

> My parents, they grew up eating this … what do you call it, weird stuff. Let's call it weird stuff, the *dereres* (okra) and the *madora's* (mopane worms) and stuff. I don't see myself eating all that. I don't want to live a life like my parents! I'm looking for the *masalads*, *chi chi* (what what/etcetera), the good stuff. I look for the good stuff that's the thing, like lasagne … foreign foods (interview with Taku, 3 February 2017).

The slang word '*masalad*' represented the urban realm, which he understood as opposite of traditional Zimbabwean food. *Masalad* mockingly referred to a Zimbabwean person who tried hard to be Western, urban or modern. I once overheard Tapiwa teasingly saying to my friend Lindiwe, 'Are you now eating *mazhanje* with your bare hands? I thought you were one of those *masalads*!' (fieldnotes, 19 August 2016). *Mazhanje* are sweet and sticky wild loquats often sold on the roadside (see figure 6.5). Lindiwe was known for liking 'new' trends, especially from abroad, from places like South Africa, Europe and North America.

Figure 6.5 A bag of mazhanje Source: photo taken by author

A common theme in my interviews with young participants was that their negative ideas about the socio-ecological imaginaries of natural food in *kumusha* that their parents glorified went hand in hand with imaginaries about the urban realm and its associated lifestyles and social status. Salad was just one example out of many foodstuffs, such as cornflakes, pork pie and tinned foods (see figure 6.6), that were a status symbol and represented urbanity, unlike the foods from *kumusha* that were seen as a product of their ancestors' surviving strategies during times of oppression. For instance, store-bought refined mealie meal was affiliated with urbanity and a higher social status than straight-run mealie meal from the miller, because it was, as Tapiwa once described it, 'white and clean' (fieldnotes, 2 December 2017), which reflected its production and processing in urban factories. By contrast, straight-run mealie meal did not have a uniformly white colour, because it was less processed, and one could still see particles of the grain husk in the final product. The urban *masalad* life was imagined as a type of life where you were not directly dependant on nature and manual labour and have to follow lifestyles that are associated with a history of hardship.

When Lindiwe was gone, I wondered about the origin of the word salad and I asked Tapiwa if *masalads* eat a lot of salad. While laughing, he explained: 'No, they take it (salad) as something special. They are the ones who act like they are top class. Most of them show off' (fieldnotes, 2 December 2017). Salad signified foreignness, because cold vegetables as part of a main meal are not regularly consumed. Only on special occasions, such as a wedding, funeral and Christmas, I had seen cold dishes, such as coleslaw and pasta salad made with mayonnaise or salad cream (see figure 6.6), that were classified as salad. Additionally, salad also represented a certain 'modern' lifestyle and beauty ideals, as seen on popular culture on television (fieldnotes, 25 December 2017). Another characteristic of *masalads* was that they were unmistakeably urban, as Richmond, a gardener in Johannesburg, explained who *masalds* were: 'It's this new generation now, eh! They like

urban lives.' In a high-pitched funny voice, while walking in a silly manner and making hand gestures, he said: 'They are used to say: I'm going to eat in a restaurant in Borrowdale or Avondale' (former upmarket white residential areas) (interview with Richmond, 11 April).

Figure 6.6 Supermarket display of Christmas foods. Source: photo taken by author.

The younger generation was, furthermore, attracted to consumption in an urban space, because it represented autonomy and possibility to choose what to eat. My conversation with university student Godfrey illuminates this further. In response to my question about his favourite foods, he mentioned an extensive list of fast-food chains:

> 'And what about Zimbabwean food?' I asked.
>
> Godfrey: 'Our food culture is not really good, stable, solid. We don't have, we currently don't have … from my own perspective'.
>
> Sara: 'So … what about *tsunga ne dovi* (green leafy vegetable with peanut butter) or with *muboora* (pumpkin leaves) … that's not typical Zimbabwean food?'

> Godfrey: 'It is typical Zim food, but how did it start? … Like where my ancestors are from … we can have *muboora* … there were circumstances for me to use peanut butter instead of cooking oil. There was no cooking oil. Option B was?... *dovi*. So that's how you can have a meal. It never emerged as a source of pleasure. It emerged due to circumstances: we don't have this and we substitute using B. It's a very obvious thing' (interview with Godfrey, 20 January 2017).

The circumstances he referred to relate to the oppression and suffering his ancestors have had to endure during colonialism. He wanted to eat food as a source of pleasure, instead of food that was born out of a context where people have had to reconcile and adapt their food choices out of necessity. For him, good food was freedom to choose what food to cook and eat, unlike food from *kumusha*, which came from a context with a violent history he did not want to be reminded of (interview with Godfrey, 20 January 2017).

The urban as a symbol of modernity and foreignness can be linked to urban cultural and social hierarchies instituted during colonialism (see Chapter 4). As already mentioned in this chapter, the basis of this hierarchy was formed by settlers constructing the city as a white cultured and civilised space where rural Africans were visitors, a discourse that was particularly present when black Zimbabweans made up a migratory workforce. When black Zimbabweans gained a more permanent urban presence, the racial spatial ordering, besides on a regional scale, also occurred on a citywide scale through urban segregation.

Segregation functioned to create and maintain a hierarchy of tastes. On the one hand, black residential areas, mostly on the outskirts of the city, were framed and regulated as culturally empty resources of labour that served the settlers' industries and their lifestyles that were made possible by exploitation of black labour in those industries, even though these black spaces also had their own vibrant cultural life, as evidenced by political activism, music, dance or sports and food markets and restaurants. On the other, the city comprised of white spaces where, in the eyes of the settlers, civilised and cultured

consumption and living took place through, inter alia, the use of Western commodities. Ideas of the urban realm as modern and foreign can be linked to these colonial urban white consumption spaces, such as Borrowdale and Avondale, whose inhabitants in 2016 were mostly members of the political black elite.

Consumption in these neighbourhoods offered a different modern and foreign – masalad – type of life. They represented a departure from the societal rejection and structural violence that young participants faced in their own neighbourhoods. Unlike Tapiwa who was simultaneously attracted to modern foods and proud of his cultural heritage, most youngsters were not proud of or did not recognise the vibrant cultures that characterised their own neighbourhoods during and after colonialism, because they represented their lived experiences of being on the wrong side of the unequal Zimbabwean society. Furthermore, because of this reason and having not grown up during the early post-independence decades and aftermath of the liberation struggle, they did not feel as much affiliation with the ruling party's nationalist rhetoric as Tapiwa' generation. Why would they believe in the greatness of the political establishment and its history when upon graduating they had to eke out a living in the informal sector and when only a few of their privileged peers whose parents belong to the political elite got meaningful chances in society?

These were issues that many older participants did not consider when disapproving the youngsters' attraction to the *masalads* lifestyle and rejection of their Zimbabwean heritage. They often described *masalads* as 'fake', 'ignorant' and 'running away from their culture', implicating they were less authentic Zimbabwean. Such sentiments stemmed from disappointment. They felt disheartened that the younger generation rejected the food and food culture that were tied to their identity and that they were keen to keep alive by passing on knowledge and practices to the new generation. During a group interview in Johannesburg, which came about when the Zimbabwean

gardener of a friend had promised me to 'arrange people to interview', an elderly Zimbabwean church leader Mr Chinyama said:

> 'I don't think we have to abandon our culture of going to *kumusha*. It's part of Zim culture. Nowadays people are no longer interested, but it's a bad idea that rural food is backward. They need to be educated about food from rural areas.'
>
> A former high school teacher in Zimbabwe and domestic worker in Johannesburg Eunice replied while looking at the other five people that were present:
>
> 'Despite the adversities they face, we must teach them (the younger generation) our foods. We must do our best. It's our responsibility too.'
>
> Then she directed her explanation at me:
>
> 'One thing about food, in our culture, food is a way of life. That's how we treat food. So if I offer you something to eat and you say no, it means you have refused to be part of us, you have rejected us. You say: whatever you are eating is below my standards. So I can never be part of you. So if I offer you food from our culture, even if you don't like it, you take it. Just a little bit. You say: OK, I'm full or I don't know this type of food. I'm not used to it, but I'm taking a little bit, so I'm not undermining you. I'm not looking down upon you. That's what our culture says. Just take a little bit, just to acknowledge like: I'm just a person like you. Otherwise, it's like: I'm of a higher class. I cannot touch your food.'
>
> Focusing on the group again, Eunice said: 'That's what I teach them.'
>
> A murmur of agreement and nodding heads among the others followed.
>
> Tapiwa then exclaimed: 'Ehe, you can't run away from your culture!' (group interview with Mr Chinyama, Eunice and others, 25 April 2017)

This fragment shows how the older generation grapples with their offspring not connecting to the traditional and natural food narrative. Some judge and scold the youngsters out of their own passion for what they believe is authentic Zimbabwean, while others try to emphasise and acknowledge the struggles the younger generation face. They hold themselves accountable to teach, through food, the socio-ecological relations all Zimbabweans have with their *kumusha*.

6.4 Chef Tawana's redefinition of traditional food

While most young people completely rejected the imaginary of natural and traditional food from *kumusha*, one young gentleman, who introduced himself to me as Chef Tawana, provided a more nuanced point of view. Instead of disguising his past, he recognised and accepted that Zimbabwean cuisine had come into being within oppressive political and economic structures. He took ownership over his culinary history by reinventing it, mixing it with present-day food trends and in doing so, celebrating the resilience of his ancestors.

Chef Tawana grew up in Chitungwiza and moved to South Africa when he was nineteen years old to study hospitality, a degree that he did not finish due to 'financial circumstances'. Starting as a dishwasher, he eventually ended up working in his dream job as a sous chef at the age of twenty-six. He returned to Zimbabwe last year for reasons he wanted to keep to himself. He only shared with me that his family needed him. In Zimbabwe, he worked as a chef in several hotels, an art gallery, and at the time I talked to him for a catering company that did weddings, church gathering and miscellaneous conferences for '*mudharas* (meaning an older man with high standing) in politics' (interview with Chef Tawana, 16 February 2017).

The conversation started with Chef Tawana telling me about how Zimbabweans have come to consume a lot of fat. Using his own interpretations of the colonial past, he concluded that the settlers' capitalist interests and accompanying domination and control of black Zimbabweans had shaped contemporary diets and racial inequalities in access to a wide variety of foods.

> Sara: 'What kind of food do Zimbabweans like?'
>
> Chef: 'I like pure foods, not too much oil. I changed when I found out I have high cholesterol. Many of us have too high cholesterol. In African cultures they say: it's the demons, the cultural things. The neighbour bewitched you, but you'll be eating so much salt, so much fat! […] Black people love oil in everything. If they could even put oil in pap!

> This woman I work with, she uses so much oil. They think it gives more taste, but there's more taste in it the way you cook it.
>
> It (using a lot of oil in one's food) all started with oppression. During oppression time, so what can you get? You don't have meat. If you get meat, you get the fat. The skin of the meat and that saturated fat, they give it to you. So that they could kill us more. Once your bloodstream is overflowing with such a diet, you get heart disease.
>
> Go to the rural areas, ask them, OK, how do you survive? They say: OK, we survive on pap and covo. What do you use in covo? They say: OK, we go to the farms, they walk say maybe thirty kilometres. When I stayed with my grandmother, I used to do that. They walk long distances to get intestine fat. That's what we eat as a meal with covo. Is that doing any good to me?
>
> The whites, you have your fillet, your nice cut. So that's how, with apartheid and the oppressions it (the current diet with too much oil) came into effect. Before, we used to just boil. Before colonialism we used to just eat boiled vegetables, natural, we go in the bush or hunt our meat. Livestock we sell it, but that's for the white people. They eat the livestock or they sell it. I think the Europeans, when they were in Africa … the Africa invasion was a business plan. It was business! I've got a clip here (pointing on top of his phone that is laying on the table). They say it was a business venture. No matter how much we sugar coat it, it was a war to destroy the black person. I mean, they take all the nice parts and they leave us with all the crap. The hooves? The head!' (interview with Chef Tawana, 16 February 2017).

This excerpt reflects a large part of my conversation with Chef Tawana, which was dominated by reflections on how colonisation and *murungus* (white people) have limited Zimbabweans' ability to consume a diet that was as diverse, as healthy and of similar good quality as the settlers' diet.

The remainder of my conversations with Chef Tawana were centred around his thoughts on how Zimbabweans can create something new out of this unequal legacy. The conversation ensued as follows:

> Sara: 'It's (the hooves and the head) like the leftovers. I've noticed that many people are still proud of it.'
>
> Chef Tawana: 'Yes, we are!'

> Sara: ‘It’s like a contradiction?’
>
> Chef Tawana: ‘It is. After doing culinary school, I believe the fat and the offcuts became our tradition, but we turned it into something else. But now we can turn it into something more! Removing all those fat, if you look at the benefits we get from these things, we get nothing. What do you benefit from a bone (referring to dishes with cow’s head, tail and foot)? Are you a dog?’
>
> We both were silent for a moment and then started laughing.
>
> Sara: ‘Are you proud of *mazondo* (cow feet)?’
>
> Chef Tawana: ‘I love it, like knucklebones. It’s the best, hey. Before the white people came, sorghum and game meat … game was our game. We never used to eat cow feet. When the white men came, they’ll say these are rejects. After being colonised by the white people, they gave us shit, but we’ve changed those shit into something good. But what we want to do now is take your *mazondo*, your cow foot, trim them get rid of excess fat and still make them nice … somewhere, somehow’ (interview with Chef Tawana, 16 February 2017).

Chef Tawana is conflicted between, on the one hand, his love for ‘rejects’ like cow feet, and on the other, the anger about the marginalisation that made people prepare that same dish. He reconciles these two aspects by recognising that Zimbabwean foodways have come into being within economic–political frameworks. He acknowledges the ways in which the historical power structures of colonialism and capitalism are present in contemporary foodways. He regarded the food that these processes produced not necessarily as something negative, because with inventiveness and creativity Zimbabwean food could be turned into something new and positive. By saying ‘they gave us shit, but we’ve changed those shit into something good’, he acknowledged the resilience and creativity of his ancestors and Zimbabweans in general in dealing with and overcoming adversities.

Relatedly, he continuously talked about reinventing Zimbabwean cuisine. He dreamt of opening his own restaurant that would combine ‘Afro-centric and then Euro influences’. While gesturing wildly, he exclaimed: ‘We need something infused! Creativity! Diversified!’

On a more serious note, he passionately told me:

> We need to be more creative, we need people with the intelligence and all necessary skills to reinvent what we are used to, and not just make it chicken feet or boiled chicken. Like Nigerians, they have names for their dishes. We need people, like myself, who can recreate and put it to the world: these are our dishes.

In a rapid pace, almost unstoppable, he proceeded to fantasise about all the dishes he could make:

> If we're having like *covo*, all organic. I shred it, like paper-thin and then I just steam it, then serve it just like that, no oil, no salt, the whole shebang. We take *mbudzi* (goat) on *gochi gochi* (barbecue). Now we add a little flavour. We take salt, dried herbs, tomato sauce, Worcester, we make it more interesting. Little sugar and red wine. People are used to salt. Now it doesn't taste only of salt. 'Oh,' they'll say, 'this is very nice'. *Derere* (okra) infused with bream from Kariba! *Matemba* (whitebait) in a side salad! Dried meat, our traditional food, boiled, hydrated made into a sauce, ah … perfect food (interview with Chef Tawana, 16 February 2017).

Unlike Tapiwa's and the younger generations' binary valorisations of good food in which local/natural and modern foods were valued separately from each other, Chef Tawana brought these separate valorisations together. He blended both types of foods as a form of art, pleasure and innovation. In creating culturally hybrid dishes, he used food as a lens to look to the future, while simultaneously recognising the past. He regarded Zimbabwean foodways as fluid, as open to innovation as long as he had the autonomy to decide how external influences are incorporated into local food. For him, good food was created by experimentation out of a position of choice, while keeping a solid local base grounded in his own culture and its socio-ecologies relations and histories.

While chef Tawana had a more nuanced and perhaps optimistic view than his young counterparts, it is important to recognise that Chef Tawana's story and

convictions represent a viewpoint that is made from a privileged position. His experiences and, his higher (even though probably also erratic) income allowed him to not entirely reject the food from *kumusha* that is associated with oppression. His more positive ideas about using creativity to reinvent Zimbabwean food were possible, because he was not as desperate and as angry as his unemployed peers who feel stuck in Zimbabwe.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that meanings of good food involve contrasting and contradictory values and are not always in line with the traditional and natural good food narrative outlined in the previous chapter. While many participants presented and believed in the good food narrative, they actually adhered to a binary valorisation of good food in which natural, local and traditional food and chemical, foreign and modern foods were negotiated. I have presented different accounts of how people construct and navigate this binary. I have shown how modern foods provided a form of escapism from daily hardships, an opportunity to express a desired identity and attain a higher social status. I have discussed different ways in which modern foods stand in relation to the good food narrative. For some participants, modern foods existed alongside the good food narrative, for younger participants they replaced the good food narrative and for others, they merged with and transformed the narrative.

This chapter has, furthermore, demonstrated that a binary valorisation of food can be understood in relation to Zimbabwe's colonial past and experiences of structural violence brought about by the political economy in the post-independence era. I have demonstrated that a value system borne out of the colonial governance of socio-ecological relations through racial spatial and environmental ordering, which as I have discussed in Chapter 4 resulted in urban segregation and a dual agriculture system, is present in contemporary binary valorisations of good food and the attraction of modern foods. The spatial and environmental ordering created a colonial order and culinary

hierarchy in which imported Western food, food consumed in white urban spaces and food produced through a white form of agriculture were a marker of cultural supremacy.

Moreover, this chapter addressed how political processes in the post-independence era are related to foodways and binary valorisation of good food. Even though Mugabe's African nationalistic and anti-colonial rhetoric fuelled for some a strong belief in the good food narrative, changing urban–rural connections among second-generation urbanites and a political economy characterised by authoritarianism and patronage economies that forced participants to deal with structural violence on a daily basis led many to be attracted to the allure of modern foods and use modern foods as a form of escapism.

Highlighting the importance of a political ecology perspective that considers how different scales relate to one another, this chapter has shown how various scales simultaneously present in the 'local'. Where the previous chapter has shown how the local scale is constructed and becomes 'fixed' through socio-ecological imaginaries of good food, in this chapter I have demonstrated that scales are relational and fluid. The binaries of food presented in this chapter break down dichotomies between the environmental and social realm, which relates to political ecology's conceptualisation of socio-ecological relations.

Lastly, this chapter complicates the food security approach to studying urban Africans' relationships with food. By studying how binary valorisations of good food are enacted in time and place, this chapter shows how meanings of good food are always in transition and highlights the importance of considering the contradictory, multi-layered, messy and complex nature of foodways, which are all aspects the food security approach does not have room for.

Chapter 7: Gender roles in the provision of good food

7.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the relation between gender and foodways and valorisations of good food. As gender relations play a central role in Zimbabwean foodways, they have featured throughout this thesis. Even though Tapiwa happily cooking *mufushwa* in Chapter 6 is an exception, the stories in the previous chapters have already hinted at the prevailing gendered division of household labour and gender hierarchies. They have demonstrated that the mother of the household, with the help of other female household members, is responsible for all domestic food labour and the men in the household are responsible to ensure that the food is available through financial means or otherwise. In chapter 3, the methodology, I wrote about when Amai had to attend a funeral, Baba cooked *sadza* for the first time since he was a nineteen-year-old bachelor. This highlights that, between the two of them, Amai has had the responsibility to prepare food since they were together. In the description of the family's day-to-day foodways in Chapter 5, Amai's day was predominantly structured around food preparation, and secondarily around consumption. For Baba, food mainly provided a daily rhythm of consumption. In the same chapter, a gendered division of responsibilities also comes to the fore in the story about serving a roadrunner chicken from *kumusha* in preparation for my parents' arrival. Baba was the provider of good food, as he fetched the chicken, and Amai prepared and cooked the chicken. Baba, furthermore, was in charge of presenting a narrative about the dish that was cooked by Amai.

This chapter considers these gender household dynamics in further detail. I delve further into gender hierarchies and gendered power relations in the household, the use, production and negotiation of intersectional gender categories and how colonial discourses around domesticity stand in relation to contemporary ideas gendered roles and responsibilities surrounding the provision of good food.

7.2 Household gender roles and gendered food responsibilities

My interviews and participant observation confirmed that cooking and all activities related to food preparation were regarded as women's tasks. The more time I spent living with my family, the more it became clear that in their role as caring individuals, women were expected to make sure that family members not only ate enough and nutritious food, but also were provided with good food. Cooking was one of the most important requirements a woman had to fulfil to qualify as a good wife. 'Most women start at learning how to cook *sadza* when they are eleven or twelve years, or earlier!. You can't be married if you can't cook *sadza*,' Amai told me (fieldnotes, 6 December 2016).

Not having grown up in Zimbabwe and being white, I formed an exception to this rule. Even though I was married to a Zimbabwean man and I was a *muroora*, (daughter-in-law), I was not expected to cook *sadza* during my stay in Chitungwiza. About a month into my stay in Chitungwiza, unspoken rules emerged regarding my role in preparing the evening meal. Amai made the *sadza* while I was tasked with the *covo*. She had shown me several times how to make the *sadza*, but she made it clear that I would not be able to make it for the family. Amai told me: 'You first need to practice with a small pot'. I agreed, because, firstly, cooking *sadza* is a delicate process that requires intuition and practical know-how that cannot be acquired from a recipe book. Secondly, I tried (see figure 7.X), but I did not have the stamina and muscles to stir the heavy paste of maize meal around in the pot (fieldnotes, 6 December 2016).

Figure 7.1 Cooking *sadza* with Amai Source: photo taken by Farai (used with permission)

Even though making *sadza* is an activity that requires intuition and embodied knowledge that defy quantifiable ingredients and rigid steps to follow, below I have adapted Amai's instructions into a loose recipe to give an impression of the process. Roughly speaking, these are the steps and general rules that most girls learn from their mothers and grandmother when they are old enough (around eleven years) to be trusted with the enamel black belly pot *sadza* is made in. Cooking *sadza* is a delicate and personal task, so I am convinced that any Zimbabwean woman reading this would make critical remarks on this 'recipe'.

***Sadza* recipe**

Cooking time:
30–45 min

Cookware:
Enamel black belly pot with long handle
Wooden spoon

Ingredients:
Mealie meal*
Water*

*Quantities depend on the eyes of the cook. She will gauge the amount of water in the pot in comparison to the number of cups of mealie meal.

Instructions:

1. Combine mealie meal and cold water in pot to make a smooth paste. The emphasis is on smooth, because good *sadza* does not have any lumps, called *mapundu*. This is a norm that needs to be adhered to throughout the preparation.
2. Take another pot and bring water to boil. Add the mealie meal paste bit by bit while stirring to avoid lumps and until it is boiling. Bubbles should be appearing in the thick white consistency. This is described with the Shona verb of *kukwata*, derived from the sound the bubbles make: *kwata kwata kwata*. Cover the pot and let it simmer for about fifteen minutes. This stage of boiling is essential because the cook needs to avoid *sadza* that is *mbodza*, which translates to undercooked, raw and stiff *sadza*. Serving *mbodza* is a grave occasion and source of great embarrassment for women. Her husband, family members or guests would view her as a failed housewife or woman.
3. Add more mealie meal and stir vehemently according to two techniques. The first one comprises of dipping the long wooden spoon, called *mugoti*, in the furthest end of the pot and pulling the mealie meal paste towards oneself. This can be alternated with dipping the spoon on the side of the pot that is closest to one's body and pushing the mealie meal upwards. The bigger the pot, the more muscle is required. The worse the skill of the cook, the more undesired *manpundu* will appear. Keep adding mealie meal until it reaches the desired consistency. Some families prefer thick and saturated *sadza* and others favour thinner *sadza*.
4. Cover the pot and let the mealie meal simmer for five minutes.
5. Use a wide spoon and dip it in hot water to serve the *sadza*. The *sadza* should ideally look like a shiny, smooth, oval, white ball (all fieldnotes combined).

Ensuring that the family ate a good meal, of which *sadza* was the cornerstone, was tied to a woman's role not only as wife and mother, but also as daughter-in-law. While these three female identities are intermingled, the meaning of being a woman in a household, including her food-related responsibilities, became particularly clear in relation to the role of a daughter-in-law, also called *muroora* or *makoti*. When family members, neighbours or complete strangers saw me doing what were considered women's household tasks, such as cleaning, washing, carrying groceries, taking care of a child, they made comments along the lines of: 'you are a real *muroora* now' or simply 'heyyy, *makoti*!'.

These comments referred to the tradition that, when couples get married, the daughter-in-law traditionally spends a period of time living at her parents-in-law's. She is supposed to undertake several household duties, including preparing and serving food, as a sign of respect to her new family. It is a rite of passage into wifehood and future motherhood, a process through which values and practices are instilled that she will need to take care of her family. As becomes evident below, one of these values relates to providing good food. In carrying out domestic work at her new family, she has an ambassadorial function, as her behaviour reflects the values of her own family and, in particular, of all the women in her family.

In my interviews I observed a trend where values of domesticity, such as the importance of a homemade meal, are linked to conceptions of good food and the role of the *muroora*. My conversation with Tanya, a mum of four and vegetable vendor in Chitungwiza, exemplifies this:

> Tanya: I'm not used to fast food. I do eat it, but I like home-cooked meal. It's just that I like to cook it myself. But it's also about money.
>
> Sara: And what if you had enough money to buy fast food as often as you want to?

> Tanya: No, no, maybe once or twice, not every day. I can't do that. I want to cook at home like a *makoti* (daughter-in-law) laughing (interview with Tanya, 28 February 2017).

Tanya continued to explain that as the mother of the household, providing familiar homemade food was a means of caring for family members and paying respect to family life.

In a similar vein, many other women, as well as men, told me that it was the women's responsibility, through cooking at home, to guarantee that the family ate good food. The following encounters provide examples of this observation. During his shift as a security guard at an apartment complex in Johannesburg, I asked fifty-year-old Jackson if he ate every day at home. He answered with a resounding yes. He proceeded to tell me about his colleague who would eat food from street vendors after his shift before coming home for dinner. He clearly did not approve and blamed the colleague's wife for not taking good care of her husband.

> Jackson: 'If you have a good wife in your house, I believe that, my wife mustn't … what can I say … she mustn't promote me to buy fast food. She must actually discourage it. (She must say) I'll prepare you good food, not fast food from the streets.'
>
> Sara: 'So is the food from your wife always the best?'
>
> Jackson: 'Ehe, it must be! (laughing). When you reach to that point of, now I'm marrying my woman, which means that everything she does is ninety-five or one hundred per cent. So you gotta believe her that whatever she prepares is good for you.
>
> But if at some point you (referring to eating outside of the home) … you cannot embrace her with something you are pretending that it's nice. You need to be honest with her' (interview with Jackson, 4 April 2017).

In the eyes of Jackson, dinner was an intimate occasion where, by means of serving good food, the woman carries out her gendered expectation of nurturing and caring for her life partner and family. If this division of domestic labour does not function according to the man's wishes, he can use his male

authority to adapt it to his wishes. These instances highlight the intimate ways in which gender hierarchies in the household are constructed on a daily basis.

My conversation with Joice who worked as a cashier in Chitungwiza also demonstrates that women are expected to possess certain skills and intergenerational knowledge that they use to ensure that the family eats good food.

> Sara: 'Who decides what's for dinner?'
>
> Joice: 'The wife! because you know what your family wants and what is good (for your family). So you have to write your duty roster. A roster, you know today I'm cooking this, tomorrow I'm cooking that. You see, so everyone will see like: today you are eating this. You know that … your husband favourite food is this, so you write it on the roster.
>
> If you don't have a roster. It's like today what am I going to eat? Eish. What am I going to cook? So if you have a roster you just look at it. Then, yeah. First week on Monday you write this (the roster). You do it per month … week 1, 2, 3, 4. So you can see that you are eating healthy.'
>
> Sara: 'Ahh, wow that's nice, very organised. I can learn from you. Where did you learn this?'
>
> Joice: 'My mother. When I was young I see her and my sisters cooking then I'll take from there. She used to make a roster: Monday beef. Tuesday chicken. Wednesday vegetables. Thursday fish.'
>
> Sara: 'And who then does the shopping?'
>
> Joice: 'The wife! You have to know what your family eats. You can't expect a man to go for shopping. Maybe if you are sick … maybe, but if you are OK, I don't think it's a good idea. It's not OK if you look at it … for men to go shopping! Ahh, no … maybe some countries they do that, but in our culture … ah, ah (shaking her head from side to side)' (interview with Joice, 21 February 2017).

The fact that Joice thinks of her husband's favourite foods as one of the first few things to write on the roster shows that women navigate existing gender

hierarchies. They prepare food within the confines of serving the male head of the household.

Most of my experiences and interviews with participants indeed confirmed traditional gendered division of household food tasks. This pattern was that ingrained for 43-year-old Mai Edith, mother of three and trader in the informal economy, the only instance when a man would cook being if there was witchcraft involved. She said:

> 'I decide what we will cook. I ask him: must I cook *sadza* or rice today?'
>
> Sara: 'Does your husband cook?'
>
> Mai Edith: 'Ahh, nooo, men from Zim, they don't believe in that. We are still having those things from the olden days. If the husband will cook for you and the neighbours will see him, they say: he's been given *mupfuhwira* (a herbal potion that women use to make men fall in love with them) form of herbal witchcraft that one, love potion! How can he do that? That's a love potion that one' (Mai Edith, 10 November 2016).

Later in the conversation when she heard about my Zimbabwean husband, she was intrigued and asked many questions about our marriage. She said it was a good thing he was older than me.

> Women should be younger than men. Women get old fast. We get pregnant and we do all the hard work in the kitchen, washing, cleaning. The men come home and sit (Mai Edith, 10 November 2016).

When I later asked her husband Baba Edith who cooked in their household, he, told me the following:

> She's the one who runs everything in the kitchen. I just make sure there's food in the kitchen. I don't prepare food in kitchen. I need to make sure there's money in the house for food. Whatever they cook, I just need to be informed that: Breakfast is ready. Dinner is ready, something like that. I cannot compete with my wife in the kitchen. Everybody got duties to do in the house. A woman is the one to look after the family even if you have a maid, you are the one who is

> responsible to do that. From my side, the wife has to do that (Baba Edith, 10 November 2016).

His answer shows that even when the wife and mother in the household also worked outside of the home (in the formal or informal sector), generated income for the family and a maid was hired to help out in the household, the preparation of food and especially dinner remained the task of the mother and wife in the household because it was a symbol for motherly care, nurture and tradition. The dynamic of the wife caring for the husband through serving good food at dinnertime gives Baba Edith dignity and reaffirms his male authority and established gender hierarchies in the household. Baba Edith's answer also demonstrates that, even though they negotiate this (see below) to a certain extent, women are in a dependent position in terms of access to resources. While the wife's domestic labour is central to the family eating good food, the men control the household's income and resources needed to eat good food. Mai Edith prepared food and functioned within a patriarchal household structure. Yet, later in this chapter, I show how women negotiate and strategise within this gendered hierarchical constellation.

Even though Baba Edith staunchly believed that his wife should be in charge of food preparation, he loved to talk about the different ways of preparing Zimbabwean dishes. At one point during the interview, Tapiwa and he were discussing in detail how to wash and cook *mufushwa*, dried green leafy vegetables. Mocking his extensive knowledge of cooking that he never applied in practice, he said to me: 'This is what you find about Zimbabwean men'. They like to talk as if they cook. He and Tapiwa burst out into a loud laughter (Baba Edith, 10 November 2016).

His comment illuminates that while women do most of the work in the process of feeding the family with good food, the men were the ones who presented the narrative of good food.

I assumed that traditional gender dynamics had changed among second-generation urban households because the younger generation was less tied to traditions of their parents' generation, as I have explained in the previous chapter regarding their stance towards modern and foreign foods. However, an interview with my brother-in-law Jeff and his wife Katie, a newlywed couple in their late twenties with a toddler, showed me that even though there were conversations happening about changing gender relations, the gendered hierarchy of the man as provider and woman as caring domestic worker remained intact.

> When I asked about who decided what was prepared for dinner, Katie said:
>
> 'Women are sidelined, he is the king, hahaha,'
>
> Jeff replied: 'Noooo, not anymore, times are changing'.
>
> Katie shook her head and said: 'If he wants roasted chicken, but I don't like it, I still have to make and eat it. Men are supposed to work, come home and that's it.'
>
> Jeff raised his eyebrows and nodded his head as a way of accepting this statement and saying, yes that's actually true (interview with Jeff and Katie, 22 August 2016).

Even though Jeff realised that the uneven distribution of household tasks was not always equal, he was comfortable with the status quo, because it benefitted him.

Within the gendered household roles and responsibilities that I have outlined so far, besides being a provider, the role of the man was to show respectful behaviour towards the wife's responsibilities. When admitting that in Zimbabwean culture it's a given that the wife prepares food, Baba emphasised that the man has to show respect to the cooking duties of the wife by always coming on time for dinner. He thought that when the man returns home late in the night after drinking in the bar, it is unfair for the wife to

wake up and make him food. ‘I know that some men would expect that, but it’s not nice’ (fieldnotes, 1 December 2016).

It is important to highlight that these household gender relations and gendered food responsibilities have changed in time and space due to colonisation, which, in turn, has led to changes in how women engaged with food and what was cooked within different households. Based on an ethnographic study of Yoruba migrant families, Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997), for example, shows that the demand for male wage labour in white-owned urban and industrial centres meant that women moved away from their kin groups, changing their ways of cooking while living in urban migrant quarters. They now cooked predominantly for their husbands and other male labourers instead of sharing food responsibilities with others in providing for their (extended) family in their (rural) place of origin. This dynamic applies to Zimbabwe too, as in section 4.5 ‘Urban diets during colonialism’ in Chapter 4 I have described how the economy of labour migration in Rhodesia changed diets that were based on agroecological farming (e.g. traditional grains and leafy vegetables, roots and tubers, legumes and some (wild) animal protein) to cost-efficient carbohydrate-heavy diets consisting disproportionately of maize.

Oyewumi (1997), furthermore, demonstrates that gender relations and gendered food responsibilities between husband and wife changed, because the focus of the woman’s existence shifted from trade to marriage as an occupation. Colonial rural-urban labour migration thus produced a new social identity for women: they became dependants and appendages of men, a role that was based on caring and providing for her conjugal partner, as the empirical accounts in this section also attest to.

7.3 Homemade food, domesticity and good food

So far I have described how both men and women produce gender subjectivities – the category of the caring mother and wife and the man as the breadwinning head of the household – through their ideas and practices

surrounding good food in the household. In what follows, I look at how Amai, in her role as mother of the household, navigates what is good food for her family. I also look at how this relates to value systems instituted during colonialism.

As was the topic of the previous chapter, Amai valued food also in a binary fashion. Amai was a staunch believer of the natural food narrative, as evidenced by my interactions with her in the previous chapters. She had immaculate knowledge of different types of indigenous plants, dishes and their culinary histories embedded in *kumusha*. At the same time, she was also attracted to 'modern' foods that did not necessarily comply with the socio-ecological imaginaries she simultaneously adopted. While Tapiwa was particularly fond of fast-food chains, the type of modern food Amai loved was English home cooking. Amai loved to bake cakes and we would discuss different recipes ranging from lemon drizzle to carrot cake with buttercream icing when she had a moment to rest after serving lunch, before Itai would wake up from his nap. She also loved to talk about recipes for dinner that were in her cookbook from her former 'women's club', which I explain more about below.

The following encounter, which revolves around preparing meatballs for dinner, demonstrates how Amai had to negotiate her quest to serve and eat modern food as part of her role of nurturing her family with good food within daily conveniences as well as habits and customs that applied in her household.

> One afternoon, Amai bought minced meat. She showed me the two packets of with styrofoam and cellophane packaged minced meat from the local Pick n Pay supermarket. 'I want to make meatballs,' she said. 'But I forgot the recipe and my recipe book is still at the reverend'. She lent it to her friend, trusted neighbour and reverend at her local church, who lived across the street. A few days earlier, I talked to Amai about this particular recipe book after I asked if she had always cooked the same dishes for dinner. She proudly told me that she sometimes used to make 'different things than *sadza*, fancy dishes'.

I figured that after my question, she wanted to show me she could also cook something else than the meat stew, sautéed green vegetables and *sadza* she would normally make. She had learnt and written down the recipes for the fancy dishes during demonstrations at the women's group she was once part of. She told me that white ladies ran the group and they would organise baking, sewing and cleaning classes as well as competitions. Amai excelled and took most pleasure in the sewing competitions, even though she also enjoyed the cooking components that the club offered.

After Amai sent my brother-in-law Tendai to run errands, he came back with the recipe book. After browsing through for half an hour, in between the recipes for curried peas and peanuts, savoury macaroni, meat pie, thick minestrone soup and butternut scones, we could not find the meatballs recipe. So, while carefully acknowledging that Amai's recipe would be the best, I offered to look up a recipe online with my smartphone: 'maybe then you will remember some of the ingredients and steps?' I said. A bit disappointed, but determined to make the meatballs she agreed and said: 'Let's go to OK (a supermarket) to get the other ingredients'.

When we unpacked the remaining meatball ingredients in the kitchen, a dilemma came to the surface: what would we pair the meatballs with? We bought macaroni, because Amai remembered that's what her recipe book said. But, once in the kitchen making the preparations to mix the minced meat, she was reconsidering. I saw her thinking, hunched over the countertop to rest her hip that always seemed to hurt. If I could read her thoughts, she was probably negotiating her family's eating preferences and weighing up the workload if she would opt for macaroni as the starch element of dinner. Tendai did not like macaroni, Baba would be hungry later in the evening if he did not eat *sadza* and as the dogs' food was leftover *sadza*, she would have to cook *sadza* separately for them.

'Let's just make *sadza*,' she concluded after a while. She had been working in her backyard garden for most of the day, tending the onions and *covo* (the most common type of green leafy vegetable), and was visibly tired. Once at the dinner table, Tendai was excited to eat the meatballs with *sadza* and covo: 'This is the best combination ever! I just never like macaroni, you know'. Baba: 'Ehee, and now I can sleep!' (he would feel satisfied by the *sadza*, as opposed to macaroni that would make him hungry after a few hours) (fieldnotes, 2 March 2017).

Looking at how the choice of meatballs with *sadza* for dinner unfolded during the day demonstrates how the binary valorisation of food plays out in a

household setting. The physical burden of domestic labour made Amai decide that *sadza* was the most convenient option to eat the meatballs with. Moreover, because she had to adapt to the male authority of Baba and exercise her role as caring mother dinner had to be in line with Baba's and Tendai's wishes, who were not accustomed to macaroni in terms of digestion and flavour. The preparation and consumption of dinner this particular night also demonstrates that the remnants of colonial domestication projects in contemporary food consumption practices, which in this case takes shape in Amai's recipe book, are embedded in everyday practical realities and gendered household power relations.

The women's club, run by white ladies as Amai described it, was part of colonial institutional measures controlling black domesticity, the home and family life of black Zimbabweans. As I have described in Chapter 4, a home craft movement in which white women taught African women how to be good and civilised homemakers, wives and mothers, was active from the 1920s until independence. Amai's women's group continued to be run by 'friendly white ladies' during the 1980s and ceased to exist somewhere in the 1990s. After that, she participated in sewing and baking competitions at her church, which possibly had taken inspiration from the women's clubs on how to showcase and promote 'proper' forms of homemaking.

She had fond memories of intellectual engagement during the classes at her former women's club and made lifelong friends with fellow participants. Apart from functioning as an inspiration for 'fancy' and special dishes, perhaps these positive experiences were also a reason her recipe book was a treasured possession. She always treated it with care and respect. While she drew on her embodied intuitive knowledge when cooking a variety of dishes that were part of the traditional and natural food narrative, she was meticulous in following the directions in the recipe book. As we were browsing through her book, I asked what some of the, to me, unfamiliar ingredients in the book were. For example, one of the ingredients for scones was '110 grams of

Stork', which she explained was a brand of margarine. She said: 'If they say Stork and you use something else, it will do, but it will not be so perfect. If they say Stork, you have to make effort to look for it' (fieldnotes, 26 February 2017).

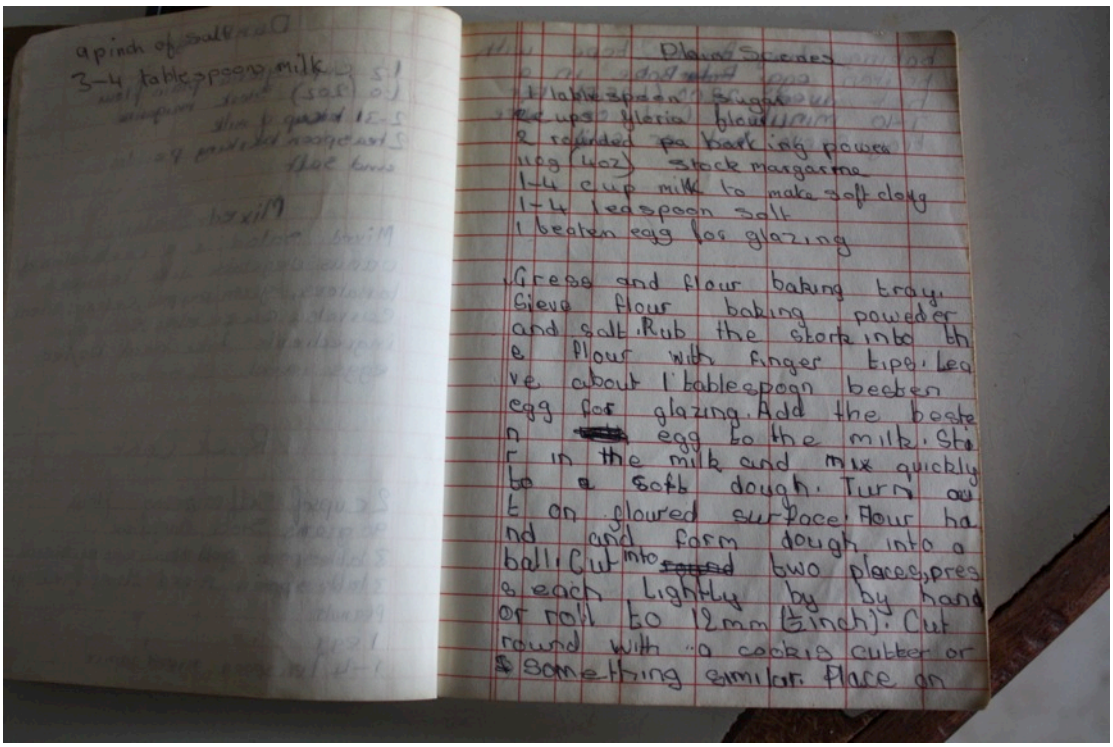

Figure 7.2 Recipe for plain scones using Gloria flour and Stork margarine, from Amai's recipe book (used with permission). Source: photo taken by author.

She used to do that. She used to bake 'a lot of cakes' when the family was living in a flat in a police station compound from the 1980s until the early 2000s. However, when they moved to Chitungwiza, many ingredients were not available anymore in her local supermarket, and if they were, they were unaffordable. She was especially upset that she could not obtain fresh cream. She reminisced, with a mixture of pride and disappointment, about baking a layered cake with cream and jam and eating it in the afternoon with coffee or different types of tea that were produced in the Chimanimani hills (fieldnotes, 26 February 2017). The family's move to Chitungwiza coincided with the overhaul of the agricultural system through land reform. A short-term consequence for the daily lives of my family was that the diversity of products they could afford decreased, as the local affordable products of the industrial

large-scale white farms were replaced by imported products from South Africa.

Amai's recipe book is an example of how the colonial institution aimed to take control over cooking techniques, palates and the ways in which food is valued. Through cooking classes, competitions and recipes, the colonial administration created a value system that regulated which products, such as Stork margarine, Holsum and OXO cubes (see figure 7.3), were considered 'good'. The value system was part of the construction of the gendered category of the civilised and good wife who was expected to prepare a particular repertoire of dishes and was able to select certain types of products. In this way, they created a desire for products that people never knew they needed, or in other words, a market for (imported) consumer goods, which was beneficial for the settlers' industries in Rhodesia and England (see also Burke 1991).

Furthermore, the fact that Amai thought of the recipes in her book as fancy and special shows that the women's clubs created a value system in which modern English home cooking was placed on a pedestal. Even though she loved her own culinary heritage, she thought the recipes from her women's club were more sophisticated. They functioned to showcase that she excelled in her gender-specific role of mother, wife and homemaker who nurtured her family with good food.

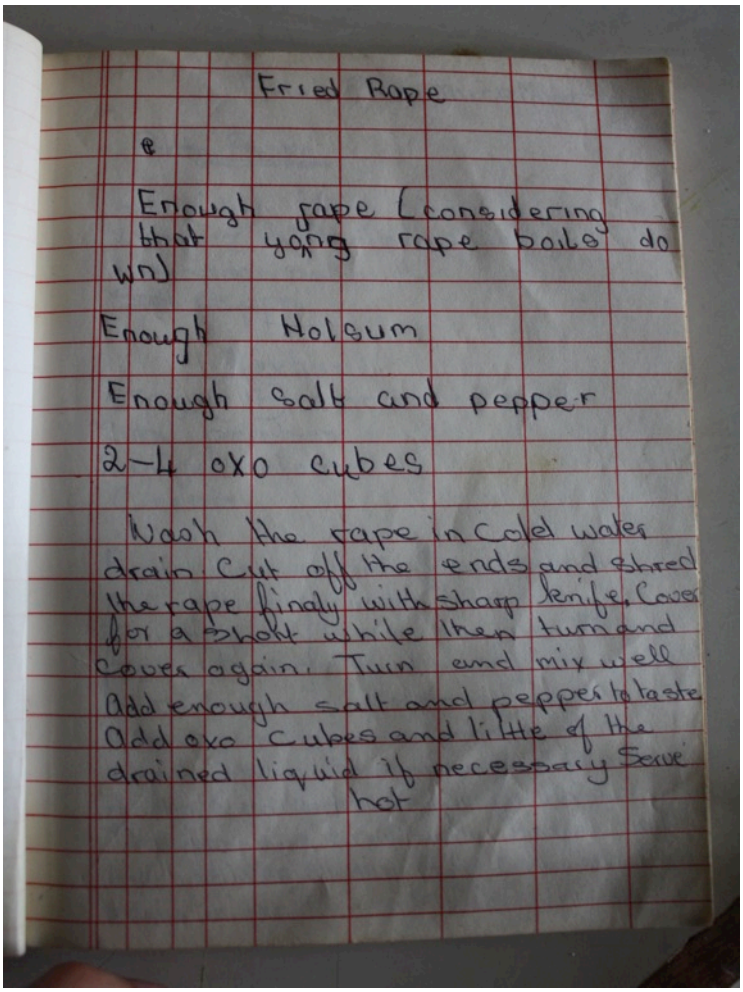

Figure 7.3 Recipe for fried rape with Holsum and OXO cubes, from Amai'

It is important to note that Amai did not feel like a victim in her role as caring wife and mother. She did not feel forced to cook 'modern' English dishes. As part of her role as homemaker, from what I could observe, she enjoyed the creative process and demonstrating beside her knowledge and skills of traditional food, her mastery of English style cooking. Even though the women's clubs ultimately functioned in the settlers' interests and involved an uneven cultural exchange in which white women had more political and economic power, considering that they were part of the colonial establishment, the women's clubs were not a forced and rigid imposition from above. Amai had positive memories of the women's club and selectively integrated what she learned into her own daily foodways, as the *sadza* and meatball dinner demonstrates. The women's club, thus, played a role in

creating Amai's binary valorisation of food and the expressions of these values in her gendered role as a homemaker.

7.3.1 Gender hierarchies, race and good food

The women's groups also raise questions about the relation between gender hierarchies, race and valorisations of food. As white women taught about their English foodways as something completely different from black foodways, categories of white and black food were constructed or confirmed. Black women were allowed to imitate white women, but because of the unequal power dynamics involved, white women would never 'lower themselves' to eat black food. This demonstrates that there are not only household gender hierarchies between men and women, but gender hierarchies are also constructed on the basis of race (and socio-economic standing) among women.

The idea that white women prepared and ate their own type of food remained present, as I found out through my own presence in Zimbabwe as a white person from Europe. For example, when a family friend, thirty-year-old Lynett, invited my husband, Tapiwa and me to come for dinner at her place, she cooked two different meals: a 'white meal' and a 'black meal'. She suggested that she and I would cook together, so I went to her place in the afternoon and found out she had bought two different types of ingredients. Lynett went to Borrowdale and had bought a variety of cheeses, green beans, baby marrow, carrots, potatoes and frozen fish filet, all ingredients for a 'white meal'. She wanted to learn how to cook like a *murungu* (white person) and she thought I would not eat '*sadza* and stuff'. Besides the mealie meal that she already had in stock, she had also bought ingredients for Tapiwa and my husband's dish: nyevhe (green leafy vegetable) and a few bream at Mbare Musika, a large outdoor market in Mbare. Lynett anticipated that especially Tapiwa would want to eat *sadza*. She told me:

> I don't know all that shit that you guys (referring to my white people) eat. I just go to one of those supermarkets in Borrowdale and then I wait and see what white ladies pick out and then I also try it. Once I picked this long green vegetable, it was not leek. It had like a minty flavour. I forgot the name, but looked up a recipe from Google and it said you had to eat it with roasted meat. It was so delicious! So I want to learn more of this *murungu* (white people) stuff. I don't know what to do with all these funny vegetables (fieldnotes, 12 January 2017).

After looking up pictures on Google together, it turned out that she referred to celery. This experience shows how the symbolic categories of white and black food were applied in daily life. The fact that Lynett assumed that I, as a white person, was not on an equal standing as her and would not adapt to food from her culinary heritage shows that the unequal racial power relations that were instituted during colonialism are still present and have an impact on how food is valued.

Moreover, while participating in household tasks, I found out, also through my presence as a white person, that the gendered category of the wife, mother and homemaker who nurtures by means of good food in a Zimbabwean household cannot be understood without considering race. When Tsitsi, a family acquaintance, visited our house while I was dishing some *sadza*, fish and relish for my husband and his brother it became clear to me that the disposition of a white wife and homemaker was different to that of a black wife and housemaker. I asked if she also wanted some lunch: 'Yes, of course!' she replied. So I also served her. Tsitsi looked at me in surprise and said: 'That's nice, because most of you don't appreciate our culture'. She was surprised that I had cooked and served a meal that was, in her eyes, normally prepared and eaten by black Zimbabweans. My sister-in-law Grace then commented: 'To be honest, I thought you were lazy and maybe my brother had to cook for himself. Because, you know, people think white women are lazy' (fieldnotes, 16 August 2016).

Grace's comment probably stemmed from her experience of seeing white women outsourcing their domestic work to black maids, highlighting the

unequal racial power relations at play that were inherited from the colonial period. Grace associated domestic work, including the nurturing of their husband by means of serving food, with being black. These encounters confirm that, as feminist political ecologists have also emphasised with the notion of intersectionality (see Chapter 2), gender identities are multi-layered.

Relatedly, in her research on the concept of gender within African cultural experiences and epistemologies, anthropologist Oyeronke Oyewumi (invention of womanhood) argues that gender is a colonial category, enforced during and after European rule. Instead of gender being a universal system of categorisation, she demonstrates how Eurocentric gender and racial categories emerged during the colonial period 'as two fundamental axes along which people were exploited and societies stratified' (Oyewumi 2002, p. 1). The consequences of this process are present in current times, as racial and gender overtones play a significant role in the conceptualisation of urban food and urban food security discourses in Zimbabwe.

As also explained in the introduction, food security in Zimbabwe is measured and understood is through European static, standardised methods (e.g. questionnaires and various metrics) and units (nuclear family). Such an approach obscures the nuances of the functioning of gender in the daily provisioning of food, highlighting the uneven postcolonial power relations in which research topics and instruments are determined by Western actors (Pala 1977). As Oyewumi (2002) contends, African social categories are fluid, instead of the Eurocentric universalist binary conception of man/woman. A woman, for example, can have patriarchal status and power due to her family's social and political positioning, as Oyewumi (2002, p. 4) shows by means of quoting the novel *Nervous conditions* by Zimbawean writer Tsitsi Dangeremba (1988). Another example from Oyewumi's work (2015) is that African conceptions of motherhood are connected to leadership and societal and community wellbeing. These conceptions of gender shape foodways, as

this chapter attests to, but are not included in current understandings of food relationships in Zimbabwe.

7.4 Negotiating and contesting gender roles

Even though women fulfil gendered expectations of domestic production in the household, they also contested and negotiated their role of dependent mother and wife. This became particularly clear when I joined Amai, a senior and active church member, at her church's weekly women's gathering. Before we went, I asked Amai what exactly happens at a meeting. She explained there would be around fifty to hundred women 'talking about how to maintain and keep a family. We (the older members) give advice to young mothers … how to deal with their husband, with their children'. I was also one of those young mothers/wives, as she also said that her church friends had already asked her: 'When does *muroora* come to church? Then we can teach her how to handle Farai (pseudonym of my husband)' (fieldnotes, 25 March 2017).

As Amai's tasks in the household were never ending and attending the women's church gatherings required her to create and claim space and time for herself, it took three attempts before we attended a meeting together. All wearing bright red suits and white hats, the gathering was led by a charismatic leader with the aura of a caring but strict teacher, a secretary and four other women whose exact functions remained unclear to me. The two hours in the main hall of the church were a female-only space where women supported each other felt safe and free to talk about issues that concerned them, ranging from conjugal relations, family politics, raising children, dealing with money, women's health and so forth.

Each unit in Chitungwiza had a representative that was in charge of reporting to the women's gathering if the families that lived there were facing any issues. The meeting started with updates from the representatives. If there was help needed due to, for example, bereavement, women living in that unit were assigned duties such as bringing meals to the affected family.

The reverend would normally give a speech, but she could not make it due to heavy rains. Instead, the leader of the women's group, Mrs Chibanda, gave a small lecture about being grateful for the rain and that it was important to collect rainwater in buckets in the face of Chitungwiza's unpredictable water supply. After, there was a revision of the previous week's conversations and lessons. Mrs Chibanda explained that they saw a lot of fights between husband and wife because it was Christmas time. She said:

> You are saying to the husband: where is all the money? But your husband doesn't have a lot of money … maybe he didn't get paid or it is a very small amount. The woman should not always wait and ask for money. If the husband says it's not there, you will be crying 'no, no, no, no' (said in a theatrical manner, to which the audience chuckled). As a mother, wife and daughter you should not buy everything (referring to buying food). You should do something, grow some vegetables and sell them. If you are sad you don't have money to buy tomatoes, you just have to put your own tomatoes around your vegetables patch (fieldnotes, 25 March 2017).

Mrs Chibanda tried to create a discussion on this topic, but everyone remained silent. In response, she exclaimed: 'Did you forget how to speak English? Are you now shy because of *muroora* (referring to my presence)?'.

One of Amai's friends, Sally, who I knew used to be an informal cross-border trader buying clothes in South Africa and reselling them in Zimbabwe, said she agreed:

> 'If I work, then I have freedom and then I can have sugar (sweets, cookies, cake, and so on). Otherwise I just wait on my husband. When he is at work I will be complaining how difficult life is, like I can't use cooking oil, so I have to put water (re cooking stew or vegetables). If I stop working, I become like *muroora*, skinny.'
>
> As Sally was a well-proportioned plus-sized lady herself, everyone had to laugh (fieldnotes, 25 March 2017).

Creating income by means of growing and selling vegetables and informal trading are strategies that serve, to a certain extent, to free themselves from their dependency on their husbands. They give the women autonomy to buy special Christmas food and indulge their sweet tooth, or in other words, consume good food solely for their own enjoyment instead of the household's. The conversations and support systems central to the women's gatherings show that they were a platform where women supported each other in their strategies of dealing with and negotiating their gender-dependent roles and responsibilities within the parameters of patriarchy in the household and society.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the crucial role of gender hierarchies and gendered power relations in the provision and valorisation of good food in the household. I have shown how the gendered category of caring, nurturing mother, wife is produced, used, negotiated and contested in daily life and within the parameters of patriarchal household structures. Within the gendered division of domestic labour and the functioning of male authority in the household. a woman is expected to have embodied skills and intergenerational knowledge that she uses to provide her family with good food.

As is also a central topic in feminist political ecology scholarship, this chapter has addressed the relation between gender and the co-constitution of scales. I looked at how contemporary gendered roles and responsibilities surrounding the provision of good food on the household scale relate to discourses around domesticity promoted by the colonial state. In this chapter, these colonial domesticity discourses came to the fore in Amai's experiences with her former women's group, which created gendered domestic responsibilities around a value system that prescribed what foodways were considered good. This value system had a racial component, placing foods that were associated with whiteness, the West and modernity, such as imported foods with specific

brand names, on top. In this sense, this chapter demonstrates that the role of nurturing the family with good food is a simultaneous gendered and racialised role, highlighting, as feminist political ecologists have also done, the importance of an intersectional approach to gender. Besides considering colonial domesticity discourses and associated value systems, I have also drawn attention to the importance of taking into account how gender roles in traditional Zimbabwean culture – for example, the education of the daughter-in-law to shape her into a caring and nurturing wife and mother that provides good food – stand in relation to contemporary gendered food responsibilities in the provision of good food.

The female role of nurturing the household with good food is central to the way in which households navigate binary foodways, as discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter has shown that women make choices about whether and how to combine both types of foods within the day-to-day constraints – dependency on male authority in the household and the multifarious effects of structural violence – that they are facing. Mothers, wives and daughters-in-law are the ones negotiating the traditional and natural good food narrative and its socio-ecological imaginaries outlined in Chapter 5 with modern foods. This observation implies that, as feminist political ecologists have also emphasised, gendered relations affect the socio-ecological relations, or in other words, the inseparable linkages between society and nature.

Lastly, this chapter challenges the food security approach to food in urban Africa, which as explained in the introduction, conceptualises urbanites' relationships to food in economic terms and through a crisis lens, because this chapter illuminates the multi-layered gender roles and responsibilities as well as domestic power relations in the provision of not just enough food, but also food that is considered good.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis has been to examine how an understanding of good food and its relation to multi-scalar and power-laden structural processes contribute to the conceptualisation of people's relationships to food in Southern Africa. To this end, I have studied how urban Zimbabweans produce and enact the category of good food in their daily lives. I have also researched how these meanings and practices that constitute the good food category stand in connection to socio-ecological, spatial, political and economic processes and their power relations on different interconnected scales.

Throughout this thesis, I have addressed the ways in which foodways and meanings of food are culturally, socially and historically constructed. I have brought to the fore the nuances of lived experiences around daily foodways and contradictory meanings of food. I have demonstrated that these stand in connection to local socio-ecological systems in specific places and their culinary and agricultural histories. I have also shown that foodways and valorisations of food relate to colonial legacies and the effects of contemporary structural violence. I have shown that socio-ecological relations and a multi-scalar analysis deepen understandings of urbanites' relationships with food. They overturn crisis narratives of food, including the food security approach, that understand food in an instrumental way.

In this chapter, I provide a summary of my findings, answer this thesis's main questions, recap and further formulate my main argument and evaluate what its main theoretical contributions are. I also consider the limitations of this thesis and suggest possibilities for future research.

8.2 Reviewing the thesis

I began this thesis by situating it in relation to existing literature on the topic of food in urban Africa. I argued that current research on urban Africans' day-to-

day relationships with food is dominated by a food security framework. Even though important for policy interventions on under- and mal-nutrition, the food security approach, which involves, implies an instrumental and reductionist conceptualisation of food relationships. In measuring households' economic ability to obtain enough and nutritious food and thereby evaluating to what extent household are food (in)secure, the framework assumes daily relationships with food are solely economic and physical in nature. Drawing upon food sovereignty and food justice critiques of the food security framework, I contended that the framework makes understandings of food in households become static and standardised, obscuring complex and contradictory ecological, social, cultural, political and gender dynamics that characterise everyday relationships with food.

I also argued that the food security approach to researching food could be seen as part of broader crisis narratives about food on the African continent. As this narrative stresses scarcity and material and cultural loss in the interest of international development agencies and agro-food corporations, I argued that the vibrant and diverse nature of African urban life forms and their histories are overlooked. I maintained that this thesis focuses on these African urban life forms by looking at daily foodways and various social and cultural meanings of good food.

Taking inspiration from urban studies scholars adhering to postcolonial Southern perspectives (Pieterse 2010, Myers 2011), I maintained that even when people permanently live a context of economic and political uncertainty, they still want to strive for human flourishing. This means that people not only attempt to fulfil their basic physical needs (for example, food security as well as shelter, health, education, safety and employment), but also their social needs (belonging, love, affection, community, companionship and fulfilling relationships) and emotional needs (self-worth and self-esteem, respect, achievement and realising personal potential). I argued that this was the reason to use the notion of good food in this thesis, because it assumes that

Zimbabweans aim to eat food that contributes to their flourishing. Asking what constitutes good food recognises that Zimbabweans are not solely occupied with obtaining enough and nutritious food in economic adverse circumstances and that food also has social, cultural and emotional functions in a context of economic uncertainty. I explained that, as the fieldwork of this study was conducted in the context of economic and political instability, it provided a case study to research foodways and meanings of good food.

I also established that while some existing quantitative food security studies and other qualitative studies on urban food addressed socio-cultural aspects of food in urban Africa, due to their underlying assumption that daily food encounters are economically preordained, they only did so in a superficial manner. I, furthermore, discussed a strand of research that recognises that foodways are the result of complex social, cultural and political factors on personal and structural levels. These studies highlight Africans' agency in creating, maintaining and adjusting dynamic and hybrid culinary cultures in postcolonial contexts, considering people's engagements with 'traditional' foods that are part of an indigenous cuisine, and on the other, 'modern' foods that were and still are consumed and introduced by former colonial powers. I argued that my research similarly involves considering such a postcolonial binary value system. I also maintained that my research adds to these studies by considering socio-ecological relations and intersectional gendered food responsibilities and roles.

I explained the similarity of my political ecology conceptual framework with food sovereignty and food justice frameworks. They have in common that they all maintain that foodways should not be understood in isolation from structural political processes. The difference between political ecology and food justice and food sovereignty, and the reason why political ecology was the most suitable for to research, is that political ecology focuses on a politics of scale of socio-ecological relations. These socio-ecological relations on

different interconnected scales are crucial to understanding urban foodways in Zimbabwe.

In the second chapter I set out why the conceptual framework of political ecology is relevant to researching foodways and good food valorisations in urban Zimbabwe. I discussed how the core concepts of political ecology – socio-ecological relations and a politics of scale – serve as suitable conceptual instruments to make sense of my findings. Drawing upon literature on geographies of food, I argued that food embodies political ecology's focus on socio-ecological relations, a concept that navigates the ways in which society and nature are co-produced and intertwined. For, in order for humans to eat, they need to act upon and alter ecological systems.

I maintained that the theoretical understandings of a politics of scale in human geography and political ecology equip me to analyse the power-laden connections between scales at which the socio-ecological relations take place. I argued that the understanding of scale in political ecology goes beyond thinking in terms of linear, vertical scalar hierarchies. Applied to this thesis, this means that I consider how a constellation of different relational scales, which is shaped by political processes and power relations, stands in relation to urban Zimbabweans' foodways and meanings of food at the household scale. It adopts, instead, a political process based and relational approach to scale. I, furthermore, explained the relevance of a feminist political ecology approach. A feminist theorisation of political ecology leads me to recognise how the gendered and simultaneously racialised gender roles in foodways and the provision of good food stand in relation to legacies of colonial racism and (colonial) patriarchies.

Chapter three focused on the methodology of this thesis. I explained how my methods, ethnographic participant observation in my family's household and qualitative interviews, were chosen based on their potential to elicit nuanced, intimate and in-depth understandings of foodways and meaning and practices

surrounding good food. I also established that I regard research as a socially situated process that is shaped by the researcher's and participants' identities. In this vein, throughout this chapter, I considered how my positionality as a daughter-in-law, a woman and white person from Europe played a role in the research process and findings. I, moreover, reflected on the fact that due to visa issues in Zimbabwe, I had to shift my research to Johannesburg, where I interview Zimbabweans who had previously lived in urban areas in Zimbabwe.

The fourth chapter focused on the processes that shaped the political economy of food and agriculture as well as urban daily lives in colonial and postcolonial Zimbabwe. I explained that this chapter is crucial within my approach to researching foodways and meanings of good food through a political ecology lens because it provides the basis for considering how these relationships stand in connection to socio-ecological, spatial, political and economic processes and their power relations on different interconnected scales. I highlighted the power relations and spatial configurations that were central to for the successful functioning of the colonial capitalist political economy. I explained that through various forms of racial spatial and environmental ordering, the colonial state instituted a dual agricultural system and high levels of urban segregation. I explained how the state controlled the dual colonial agricultural landscape, which was characterised by white settler owned large-scale farms that practised a techno-scientific and export-oriented mode of agriculture and indigenous Zimbabweans' smallholder systems of peasant agriculture in confined reserves.

I, furthermore, demonstrated how a value system and social hierarchy was created in which the white European settlers, their foodways, and spaces of consumption and production were constructed as socially and culturally superior. I mentioned that I would place this in relation to contemporary foodways and meanings and practices of good food in the empirical chapters. I also described elaborate pre-colonial foodways and black Zimbabweans'

vibrant food markets attest to, which I pointed out show that colonial policies of conquest and control are not all-encompassing structures that completely shaped Zimbabweans' foodways and food valorisations.

I outlined how political economy of agriculture in the post-independence period was characterised by tensions and shifts between ZANU–PF's economic redistribution efforts and their claim to economic and political power. I described that despite tackling to a certain extent resource inequality through land reform, years of public sector negligence, economic mismanagement, authoritarianism and economies of patronage led to dire living circumstances and various forms of structural violence for the average Zimbabwean, particularly during and after the crisis years in the 2000s.

Besides discussing basic elements of everyday foodways in a family setting in Chitungwiza, the fifth chapter revolved around how meanings and practices of good food formed a good food narrative, wherein good food is inextricably linked to imaginaries of local socio-ecological systems and their histories. I explained that the core idea of the narrative: that good food was food that was nourishing and pure because it was produced in harmony with local ecological systems. I demonstrated how the narrative drew upon idealised food practices, meanings and spaces that were linked to embodied ways of being, knowing and living in *kumusha*, the rural or ancestral homeland. I also discussed that these social and cultural dispositions originating in *kumusha* were partly connected to the colonial control of socio-ecological systems and partly to indigenous culinary histories.

I argued that the narrative reveals that multi-spatial households' urban–rural connections are, besides economic (*kumusha* providing a safety net in times of duress), also social and cultural in nature. I maintained that the narrative is a project in scale making, not in the interest of strategic political ends, but in terms of serving social and cultural functions. As the stories and encounters in this chapter have demonstrated, the narrative about the local scale – and the

natural and nourishing good food it produces – allows urbanites to connect with their culinary history and affirm their identity. Lastly, I highlighted that the construction of the good food narrative complicated the food security framework, because the narrative illuminates that people's relationships to food are multifaceted and complex as well as social and cultural in nature, instead of instrumental and determined by one's socio-economic position.

Chapter six placed the good food narrative in relation to other valuations of good food that are predominantly based on ideas of progress, development, modernity and social hierarchies. In this sense, the chapter chronicled different accounts of the ways in which people deal with, construct and shift between values within what I called a binary valorisation of good food involving what were perceived traditional and modern foods. I explored how for some participants, modern foods existed alongside the good food narrative, for younger participants they replaced the good food narrative and for others they merged with and transformed the narrative.

This chapter provided insights into how contemporary binary foodways and meanings of food reflect postcolonial legacies and urban experiences of structural violence. I argued that the colonial spatial and environmental ordering that created a social and culinary hierarchy in which imported Western food, food consumed in white urban spaces and food produced through a white form of agriculture can be placed into relation to the attraction of modern foods. Furthermore, declining urban–rural connections among second-generation urbanites and a political economy of authoritarianism and patronage economies that created various forms of structural violence led many to be attracted to the allure of modern foods and use modern foods as a form of escapism. I also showed how participants contest and negotiate the meaning of the local scale, demonstrating that scales are relational and fluid. Lastly, I argued that this chapter complicates the food security and crisis narrative of researching relationships to food, because how meanings of good food are contradictory, complex and always in transition.

Finally, chapter seven addressed the crucial role of gender and gendered power relations in the provision and valorisation of good food in the household. I explored how the intersectional gendered category of caring, nurturing mother and wife is produced, used, negotiated and contested in daily life and within the parameters of patriarchal household structures. I, furthermore, looked at how colonial discourses around domesticity stand in relation to intersectional gender roles and responsibilities. I explored how colonial women's groups created gendered domestic responsibilities around a value system that prescribed what foodways were considered good. I showed that this value system had a racial component, placing foods that were associated with whiteness, the West and modernity, such as imported foods with specific brand names, on top.

I have also explored how gender roles in traditional Zimbabwean culture – for example, the education of the daughter-in-law to shape her into a caring and nurturing wife and mother that provides good food – stand in relation to contemporary gender roles. I argued that the role of nurturing the household with good food is central to the way in which households navigate binary foodways and negotiate the traditional and natural good food narrative and its socio-ecological imaginaries outlined in Chapter 5 with modern foods. Lastly, I maintained that the chapter challenges the food security framework, because it acknowledges the multi-layered gender roles and domestic power relations in the provision of not just enough food, but also food that is considered good.

8.3 Main conclusions and contributions

In what follows, I write and reiterate the conclusion that emanates from the three main objectives that I introduced in the introduction. The first main question that I posed in the introduction concerned what good food means to urban Zimbabweans and how the category of good food is constructed in time and space. Considering the above summary of the empirical chapters has already answered this question in detail, I highlight four key concluding points

below. The first point relates to the multi-layered nature of foodways. There is not a single answer as to what good food means to urban Zimbabweans, as the different stories of the participants in this thesis have illustrated. My findings have shown that foodways of people who live in a context of persistent economic crisis are multifaceted. In their foodways, urbanites in Zimbabwe think and act in simultaneously economic, cultural and social ways. Food is thus of material *and* symbolic importance in a context of economic instability.

Second, my findings demonstrate that the category of good food is constructed in space. As urban residents are part of multi-spatial households that have various economic, social and cultural urban-rural connections, their meanings and practices around good food also reflect this 'multi-spatialness'. Highlighting the importance of considering contemporary and historical socio-ecological relations in foodways, my findings demonstrate that urban residents negotiate their connections to, and agricultural and culinary heritage in, *kumusha* in the process of constructing meaning around food.

Third, the findings in this thesis show that meanings of good food are constructed in time. Researching meanings and practices of good food in this thesis has shown that contemporary urban Zimbabweans' foodways should be understood as postcolonial foodways. I have shown that a dual valorisation of food, involving shifting, contradictory and negotiated categories of what are considered traditional and natural foods as well as modern foods reflects colonial legacies (the ordering of socio-ecological systems and concurrently instituting racial hierarchical value systems) and its resistance. Fourth, my findings demonstrate that the ways in which the category of good food is constructed in time and in space are gendered. I revealed how intersectional gender roles are spatially and historically constructed and how their production, enactment and contestation intersect with meanings and practices of good food.

The second main question posed in the introduction is: 'How do (gendered) meanings and practices of good food stand in connection to socio-ecological, spatial, political and economic processes and their power relations on different interconnected scales?'. Central to this question is a politics of scale. I have shown how the local scale, with local being a descriptor for the close by, immediate, micro scale, the scale that covers socio-ecological systems that are familiar, personal and proximate, stands in relation to wider structural scales, which in this thesis are national policies instituted by the colonial and post-independence state. I have argued that legacies of colonial racial environmental ordering and post-independence authoritarian economies of patronage resulting in structural violence have shaped and continue to shape people's relationship to food and the socio-ecological contexts in which food is produced in various ways.

However, this analysis of how macro-political forces are experienced and navigated in everyday lives on the micro scale has also shown that the effects of national politics are neither unifying forces, nor all-encompassing and determining forces. The shifting meanings within urbanites' binary valorisation of good food reveals that historical and contemporary national policies are symbolically experienced and negotiated in varying ways. Moreover, the construction of the good food narrative, which is situated at and premised on imaginaries of the local scale, shows there is a negotiation of the effects of colonial and postcolonial political national forces. For, the production of the categories of traditional and natural foods and their valorisation as good reflects a reclamation of ownership and dignity over Zimbabwean urbanites' socio-ecological, agricultural and culinary histories and identities.

This negotiation highlights different sorts of power at play between scales. It highlights complex inter-relationships between, and coexistence of, the aftereffects of historical state-led authoritarian power, the kind of power that was necessary to control socio-ecological systems and social value systems in the interest of colonial capital at the national scale (Southern Rhodesia) and

international scale (the metropolitan state), and the power and discursive agency that everyday Zimbabweans have in constructing their own value systems that reclaim their food-related socio-ecological heritage. Ultimately, the negotiations between macro and micro scales through food discussed in this thesis demonstrate that, instead of scale being hierarchical and linear, with wider macro-political scales determining in a one-directional fashion the micro scale, scales are intertwined in ever-shifting networks.

The third main question in this thesis speaks to its theoretical contributions. In the introduction I asked: 'How can understandings of good food and its relation to multi-scalar and power-laden structural processes contribute to the conceptualisation of people's relationships to food in Southern Africa?'. In the introduction, I have argued that a crisis narrative dominates the conceptualisation of food relationships in urban African settings. I maintained that the disproportionate focus on safeguarding urbanites' physical and material food-related needs in food security research, a framework that can be seen as part of a crisis narrative, explains why food's simultaneous importance to economic, social, and cultural processes is barely acknowledged in African urban settings.

The insights into urbanites', often contradictory, meanings and practices of good food in this thesis provide a socio-cultural experiential understanding of foodways. In this vein, my findings reveal how people's diverse food relationships are central to human flourishing, that is, how food is a source of pleasure, belonging, love, affection, community, companionship, fulfilling relationships as well as self-worth, self-esteem, respect, achievement and realisation of personal potential. My findings, thus, complicate the food security framework's focus on instrumental food relationships, which are narrowly characterised by two considerations: 'what foods are most cost effective and what foods are most nutritious?'. In other words, the findings in this thesis highlight the need to look beyond food security, because the framework overlooks the significance of symbolic functions of food in

everyday lives, in favour of material ones. Furthermore, by considering a politics of scale and placing urbanites' everyday diverse food relationships within wider political, economic and socio-ecological systems, the findings in this thesis emphasise the need to recognise that food relationships are political, gendered, place-based, and intertwined with socio-ecological systems racialised agrarian histories, postcolonial identities and household gender relations.

Now that I have elaborated on the main theoretical contributions in this thesis, I also briefly highlight its main methodological contribution. This thesis contributes to studies of urban food in Zimbabwe, because, as also explained in the methodology section, existing studies are quantitative in nature and use a technocratic food security lens. By using ethnographic participant observation as well as qualitative interviews, I have been able to speak to everyday food practices and contradictory meaning-making processes around food. These methods have provided insights into the 'messy' social worlds and foodways of urbanites. My methods, particularly ethnographic particpants observation, have brought to the fore that daily food relationships in urban Zimbabwe are not easily quantifiable or measured, as the dominant methodologies in the current food security discourse imply.

8.4 Limitations and opportunities for further research

Even though I am confident that this thesis provides important empirical and theoretical contributions, it has a number of limitations. Most of these limitations are connected to suggestions for areas where further research would be fruitful. One of these limitations relates to the fact that, due to visa-related issues, I have had to interview Zimbabweans based in Johannesburg to create a more diverse sample of participants in terms of age, occupation and gender. It would have been more ideal to broaden my sample within Chitungwiza. Although I selected participants on the basis that they had previously lived in a similar urban area like Chitungwiza, their responses had inevitably been coloured by their immigration experience. Living away from Zimbabwe in a country where they face xenophobic violence and

discrimination, their memories of foodways and good food in Zimbabwe provided a sense of belonging and nostalgic longing for their homeland. Therefore, their stories could have been more romanticised and idealised in nature than when I had interviewed participants with similar characteristics in Chitungwiza.

A related opportunity for further research would be to consider a more diversified sample within Zimbabwe. Considering I have, along with feminist political ecologists, highlighted the importance of looking at intersectional identities in foodways and meanings of food, future research would benefit from taking into account how different aspects of people's identities intersect in foodways or how foodways differ between people with different identities. Research could, for example, consider more specifically than I did the role of one's ethnic identity (Shona and Ndebele). Research could also include class differences and include foodways of the elite. Other options could be to include participants who have returned from studying, living or working abroad in South Africa, the UK, Australia, Canada and the US, the most common countries Zimbabweans emigrate to (IOM 2018).

Another limitation of this thesis is that the empirical fieldwork is solely conducted in an urban area and only with Zimbabweans that reside in an urban household. Yet, as I have shown throughout this thesis, urban households have strong urban–rural connections and are better understood as multi-spatial in nature. This implies that research on urban-based households should ideally reflect their multi-spatial nature. While my research reflects this to a certain extent by talking to people about their connections to and experiences in *kumusha*, my insights into urban–rural connections in foodways and meanings of food could have been deepened and enriched by fieldwork – interviews or ethnographic participant observation – in *kumusha*. There were plans for Baba to show me around in *kumusha* – he was keen to show me his maize plot and roadrunner chickens – but due to family politics larger than me, I ended up not visiting the family's *kumusha*. A

recommendation for future research on foodways of urban Zimbabweans, therefore, would be to conduct in-depth fieldwork into the multi-spatial journeys, activities and lived experiences of urban-based households in their foodways and in their quest to provide good food.

Lastly, as I was so deeply and emotionally engaged in participating in and talking about urbanites' everyday and mundane foodways and meanings of food, to my disappointment, I was not able to surmount the political process of connecting with and gaining permission to interview actors and organisations that work within the food security and food sovereignty paradigms. I wanted to conduct interviews or observe how local governments, the national government, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), other international agencies, non-governmental organisations and community- and international activist groups kept intact and challenged the food security paradigm. This would reveal different sorts of power at play in discourses of, approaches to, and interventions in, people's foodways and relationships with food.

Qualitative research with these various actors could confirm or challenge the assumption that actors working with food security perpetuate crisis narratives and instrumental and economic approaches to urbanites' relationships to food, an assumption that I based on the review of studies on urban food in Southern Africa in the introduction. Not having been able to include these different actors in my fieldwork can be seen as a limitation, but it can also be interpreted that it was beyond the scope of this thesis. Either way, a research agenda and approach that considers the ways in which different political actors at different scales exert their power in creating certain narratives around people's foodways would be welcome. These insights could be placed into conversation with insights on complex and contradictory foodways and meanings of good food from this thesis.

8.5 Policy suggestions

In 2013 the Zimbabwean government presented its Food and Nutrition Security Policy 2013-2020, with the central policy goal:

> promote and ensure adequate food and nutrition security for all people at all times in Zimbabwe, particularly amongst the vulnerable and in line with our cultural norms and values and the concept of rebuilding and maintaining family dignity (Mukudoka 2013, p. 8).

The findings in this thesis could be relevant to the policy framework of food and nutrition security at Zimbabwe's relevant various institutional levels (Provinces and Districts, various sectors at the national level, Taskforce Food and Nutrition Council (Mukudoka 2013)). The concept of good food could be used as an instrument in policy making to understand whether people are able to have relationships with food that contribute not only to their basic physical needs, but also to, as is also described in the above main policy goal, cultural norms and values and family dignity.

The concept of good food could also prompt the various players (governmental bodies, donor organisations and NGOs) that directly or indirectly linked to the national food and nutrition security policy to take indigenous food and agricultural knowledge and practices more seriously into consideration. In their plea to create an Indigenous and Nutrition Security policy for Zimbabwe, Chirimuuta and Gudhlanga (2016) argue that most actors in the realm of food security in Zimbabwe are not rooted within the communities their interventions are supposed to benefit. They stress the need for policy actors to divert attention and endeavours from ivory towers to real experiences and lessons on the ground. The various foodways and meanings of food in this thesis as well as the concept of good food could inform this shift. Moreover, the insights from this thesis into the socio-ecological nature of daily food relationships, including during times of food insecurity, in Zimbabwe could contribute towards re-establishing the links between ecology, equity and health in food policy, an appeal that Tim Lang (2010) makes in the face of the productivist approach to food policy in the twentieth century.

Lastly, food sovereignty and food justice activists in Zimbabwe and beyond (particularly in the Global South) could draw upon my findings to strengthen their fight to make the food system more democratic, fair and equitable, as my findings demonstrate that unequal power relations play a role in shaping inequalities in people's ability to not only consume enough and sufficiently nutritious food, but also to eat good food.

8.5 Final thoughts

I am forever indebted to my family-in-law and all the participants involved in this research for sharing their knowledge, experiences and skills with me. I can only hope that I am able, if even in a modest way, to do them justice through this thesis. I end with a snippet of a conversation that I had with Baba about what he thinks will happen with Zimbabwean foodways in the future. His words express hope and a desire for a Zimbabwe where everyone is able to eat the good food that they desire. With his children and grandchildren in mind, he told me:

> I hope that we keep the connection to *kumusha*, that traditional food stays a part of our culture… that food makes us strong… and it gives warmth in the family, having conversations, like this! And how we did with you and your parents, sharing food, that we welcome others with food. But also eating other foods, any foods that they (referring to his children and grandchildren) want, the reason doesn't matter, I hope they can do that (fieldnotes, 12 March 2017).

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Appendix A: List of participants

This list contains all interview participants in Chitungwiza and Johannesburg as well as the main participants I engaged with during ethnographic participant observation in Chitungwiza. I have obviously interacted with many more people during participant observation in Chitungwiza, but it is impossible to list them all here.

Interview participants and main participant observation (PO) participants						
#	**Pseudonym**	**Age**	**Gender**	**About participant**	**Type of engagement**	**Place of residence**
1	Amai	50s	female	Housewife, mother of 5, senior church member	participant observation, living together	Chitungwiza
2	Baba	50s	male	Retired police chief, father of 5	PO, Living together	Chitungwiza
3	Jeff	30s	male	University graduate, truck driver	PO, living together	Chitungwiza
4	Katie	20s	female	University graduate, mother	PO, living together	Chitungwiza
5	Jerry	20s	male	University student	PO, living together	Chitungwiza
6	Tendai	teens	male	High school student	PO, living together	Chitungwiza
7	Gogo	80s	female	Grandmother, farmer	PO, living together	Chitungwiza
8	Precious	20s	female	Domestic worker	PO, living together	Chitungwiza
9	Grace	30s	female	Nurse	PO, sister in law, visiting often	Chitingwiza
10	Tapiwa	30s	male	Self-employed hustler	Research assistant, PO, interview	Mbare
11	Mai Tapiwa	60s	female	Retired cross-border trader, mother	interview	Mbare
12	Lindiwe	20s	female	University student	PO, interview	Chitungwiza

13	Lynett	30s	female	Informal/self-employed trader	interview	Chitungwiza
14	Joice	20s	female	Cashier	interview	Chitungwiza
15	Tatenda (and customer)	40s	female	Hairdresser	interview	Chitungwiza
16	Marvellous	50s	male	Police officer	interview	Chitungwiza
17	Sally	60s	female	Retired cross-border trader, farmer	interview	Chitungwiza
18	Gift	20s	female	Domestic worker	PO, interview	Chitungwiza
19	Walter	40s	male	Kombi driver	interview	Chitungwiza
20	Collin	40s	male	Car parts salesman	interview	Chitungwiza
21	Themba	30s	male	Kombi driver	interview	Chitungwiza
22	Christopher	40s	male	Mechanic, extended family	interview	Chitungwiza
23	Clifford	60s	male	Driving instructor	interview	Chitungwiza
24	Chef Tawana	20s	male	Chef	interview	Chitungwiza
25	Godfrey	20s	male	University student	interview	Chitungwiza
26	Taku	Late teens	male	High school graduate	interview	Kuwadzana
27	Maita	50s	female	Teacher	interview	Kuwadzana
28	Mai Anita	50s	female	Housewife, mother, trader	interview	Chitungwiza
29	Nokutenda	40s	female	Self-employed trader	interview	Chitungwiza
30	Reverend	40s	female	Reverend	interview	Chitungwiza
31	Mrs Chibanda	60s	female	Homemaker, church leader	PO at church	Chitungwiza
32	Baba Edith	40s	male	Cross-border trader	interview	Chitungwiza
33	Mai Edith	40s	female	Trader, mother	interview	Chitungwiza
34	Lovemore	40s	male	Kombi driver	interview	Chitungwiza
35	Chipo	30s	female	Mother, vegetable vendor	interview	Chitungwiza
36	Tilda	50s	female	Farmer and trader	PO, neighbour	Chitungwiza

37	Majory	50s	female	hairdresser	interview	Chitungwiza
38	Prince	20s	male	vendor	interview	Chitungwiza
39	Tinotenda	40s	male	vendor	interview	Chitungwiza
40	Mr Chatara	60s	male	Retired teacher	interview	Chitungwiza
41	Sam	40s	male	Taxi driver	interview	Johannesburg
42	Tinashe	20s	male	Bottle store employee	interview	Johannesburg
43	Themba	30s	male	Gas station attendant	interview	Johannesburg
44	Eunice	50s	female	Former teacher and domestic worker	group interview	Johannesburg
45	Mr Chinyama	60s	male	Church leader	group interview	Johannesburg
46	Nyarie	30s	female	nurse	interview	Johannesburg
47	Chipo	30s	female	nurse	interview	Johannesburg
48	Jackson	50s	male	Security guard	interview	Johannesburg
49	Barnabos	70s	male	butcher	interview	Johannesburg
50	Wellington	20s	male	baker	interview	Johannesburg
51	Mr Chibhabha	60s	male	souvenir street vendor	interview	Johannesburg
52	Richmond	40s	male	gardener	interview	Johannesburg
53	Rutendo	20s	female	waiter	interview	Johannesburg
54	David	40s	male	waiter	interview	Johannesburg
55	Kuda	50s	male	Parking lot attendant	interview	Johannesburg
56	Tonderai		male	Parking lot attendant	interview	Johannesburg
57	Jackson	50s	male	gardener	interview	Johannesburg
58	Sibongile	30s	female	Supermarket employee	interview	Johannesburg
59	Matilda	20s	female	Gas station attendant	interview	Johannesburg
60	Simba	30s	male	dishwasher	interview	Johannesburg
61	Tee	30s	female	Sale representative	interview	Johannesburg
62	Michelle	40s	female	Self-employed	interview	Johannesburg
63	Ms Sibanda	50s	female	receptionist	interview	Johannesburg
64	Garai	20s	male	barista	interview	Johannesburg
65	Tichaona	40s	male	Self-employed	interview	Johannesburg
66	Sheline	40s	female	Domestic worker	interview	Johannesburg

Appendix B: Interview topic guide

Possible conversation starter

- What is your favourite food? Why?

Daily foodways

- What do you eat on a day-to-day/ weekly basis? How do you decide what to eat?
- Has this changed throughout your life?
- Do you eat at home or outside of the home? What do you prefer?

Food sourcing

- Where do you get your food? (Corner shop, other food stores, supermarket, outdoor market, transport hub, own garden, kumusha?) Why there?
- Can you describe a shopping trip?
- Do you exchange or gift food (incl. from rural areas)? How, with who, when, how often why?
- If you are cooking or buying food, do you take into account if the food is healthy or not?
- Is it possible to acquire the food that you or your family want?

Food meanings

- What is your favourite food? Why?
- Can you describe what is good food?
- Can you tell me about some recipes that you like?
- What food would you like to eat more of?
- What would you like to eat less of?
- If there is a party or special occasion (birthday or Christmas), do you make special food?
- Can you describe what kind of food Zimbabweans eat?
- Do you think there is something like traditional/urban/rural food?

- What is Zimbabwean/traditional/urban/rural food? Examples?
- Do you know where the food that you eat comes from? Does it matter to you how food is produced?
- Do you think the way you/Zimbabweans eat will change in the future?

Gender roles

- Who does the cooking/shopping/growing food in your household?
- Who decides what you/your family eats?
- Has it always been like this?

Appendix C: Coding overview

- Food sourcing
  - Urban farming
  - Kumusha
  - Social network
  - Supermarkets
  - Proximity/local
  - Gendered
  - Affordability

- Description Zim food
  - Commensality
  - Natural/organic
  - Land/climate
  - Food as commons
  - Kumusha
  - Home made
  - Non processed
  - No variation
  - Rural
  - Survival
  - Quality ingredient
  - Taste
  - Authenticity
  - Local/proximate
  - Traditional
  - Ancestors
  - Backward/negative

- Urban daily life
  - Hustling
  - livelihood
  - No choice
  - Remittances/migration
  - Insecurity
  - Violence
  - Politics
  - Housing constraints

- Food meanings
  - Western/modernity
    - Aesthetics
    - Urban hierarchy
    - Taste
    - Fast food

- Brands
- Development
- Status
- Poverty
- Race
- Colonial
- Marital relations
- Religion
- Body/visceral
- Chemical/non natural

Foodways
- Eating system
  - Meal structure
  - Daily rhythm
  - Social context eating
- Convenience
- Household politics
- Gendered responsibilities
  - Female preparing
  - Male provider
  - Mixed/negotiation
  - Colonial
- Life history
- Knowledge
  - Intergenerational
- Deskilling
- Visceral
  - Strength
  - Energy
- Health
  - Diversity
  - Doctor
  - Fat
  - Food safety
  - fibre

Urban-rural connections
Generation

Food sourcing specific to Joburg
- Crime
- Zim shops
- Cash flow
- Corporate food system
- Social network Zim

Food meanings specific to Joburg

Alienation origins
Body change
Adapting new foodways
Commodification